IMMANUEL:

Or, A DISCOVERY of

TRUE RELIGION,

As it imports

A living Principle in the Minds of Men.

WITH

A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

COMMUNION with GOD.

By SAMUEL SHAW, M. A.
Some time Minister of *Long-Whatton*, *Leicestershire*.

The THIRD EDITION, carefully revised.

To which are prefixed,

Some MEMOIRS of the AUTHOR.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

SOME

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF THE

AUTHOR.

MR Samuel Shaw, M. A. was born of religious parents at *Repton* in *Derbyshire* in the year 1635, and educated in the Free school there, at that time the best in those parts of *England*. He went thence at fourteen years of age to St *John*'s College in *Cambridge*. Upon the completion of his studies he removed to *Tamworth* in *Warwickshire*, and was master of the Free-school there in 1656. From *Tamworth* he removed to *Mosely*,

Mosely, a small place in the borders of *Worcestershire*, being invited thither by Colonel GREAVIS of that place, who had a great respect for Mr SHAW, and shewed him great kindness. At his coming thither he was ordained by the Classical Presbytery at *Wirksworth* in *Derbyshire*; and in 1658, by the assistance of Mr GERVAS PIGOT of *Thrumpton*, he obtained a presentation from the Protector to the Rectory of *Long-Whatton*, worth 150*l. per Annum*. In *June* this year (*viz.* 1658) he had full and peaceable possession of this place, and continued so to have till King CHARLES's return in 1660. Upon this event, fearing some disturbance might arise, he in the month of *September* that year obtained, without much difficulty, a fresh presentation under the great seal of *England*. But though his title was thus corroborated, yet Sir JOHN PRETTYMAN made interest with the Lord Chancellor HYDE, and they found means to remove Mr SHAW in 1661, about a year before the Act of Uniformity came abroad. After this ejectment he never had any public living, and so was not

not properly turned out by the Uniformity-Act, though he was silenced by it, for he could not satisfy himself to conform, notwithstanding he was afterwards offered his living without any other condition than that of re-ordination; but he used to say that he would not lie to GOD and man in declaring his Presbyterian Ordination invalid.

Upon Mr SHAW's leaving *Whatton* he went to *Cotes*, a small village near *Loughborough* in the same county. During his residence here his family was afflicted with the Plague, who received the infection from some relations that came thither from *London* to avoid it. It was about harvest 1665. About that time he preached in his family, and afterwards published that excellent useful Book, called, *The Welcome to the Plague*, from *Amos* iv. 12. *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.* He buried two children, two friends, and one servant, of that dreadful distemper; but he and his wife, who both had it, escaped with their lives, and looked after one another, and the rest of the fa-

mily, which was a great mercy, for none durſt come to his aſſiſtance, and he was in a manner ſhut up for about three months together. Mr SHAW was forced not only to attend his ſick, but to bury his dead himſelf in his own garden *.

Towards

* How ſore an affliction Mr SHAW muſt in theſe circumſtances have undergone cannot be eaſily conceived, but great, amazingly great it muſt have been. But hear how the good man ſpeaks in his Preface to his piece intitled, *The Welcome to the Plague*, which was drawn up and publiſhed upon the occaſion. "Let me call upon "men and angels, ſays he, to help me in celebrating "the infinite and almighty grace and goodneſs of the "eternal and bleſſed GOD, — who enabled me to *abide* "*the day of his coming*, Mal. iii. 2. to ſtand when he ap-"peared; and made me willing to ſuffer him to ſit as a "refiner of ſilver in my houſe; — who carried me above "all murmurings againſt, I had almoſt ſaid, all remem-"brance of thoſe inſtruments that conveyed the infection "to me; — who reconciled my heart to this diſeaſe, ſo "that it ſeemed no more grievous or noiſome than any "other; — who ſubdued me, I had almoſt ſaid, brought "me in love with this paſſage of the divine will. I can "remember (alas! that I can ſay little more but that I "do

Towards the latter end of the year 1666 he removed to *Aſhby de la Zouch* in the ſame county; and he was choſen to be the ſole Schoolmaſter of the Free-ſchool in 1668. The revenue

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" do remember) how my ſoul was overpowered, yea,
" and almoſt raviſhed with the goodneſs, holineſs, and
" perfection of the will of GOD; and verily judged it
" my happineſs and perfection, as well as my duty to
" comply chearfully with it, and be moulded into it;—
" who gave me a moſt powerful and quick ſenſe of the
" plague of a carnal heart, ſelf-will, and inordinate crea-
" ture-love, convincing me that thoſe were infinitely
" worſe than the plague in the fleſh;—who wonderfully
" preſerved me from the aſſaults of the devil; never let
" him looſe ſo much as to try his ſtrength upon my inte-
" grity, to drive me to a deſpondency, or to any uncha-
" ritable concluſions concerning my ſtate;—who ena-
" bled me to converſe with his love and mercy in the
" midſt of his chaſtning; to ſee his ſhining and ſmiling
" face through this dark cloud; yea, kept up clear and
" ſteady perſuaſions in my ſoul that I was beloved of
" him, though afflicted by him;—who knew my ſoul
" in adverſity, viſited me when I was ſick, and in pri-
" ſon, refreſhed, ſtrengthned, and comforted my inner
" man

revenue was then but ſmall, and the ſchool-buildings (the few there were) quite out of repair; but Mr SHAW by his diligence ſoon got the ſalary augmented, not only for himſelf, but

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" man in a marvellous manner and meaſure, and made " me appear to myſelf never leſs ſhut up, than when " ſhut up. O would to GOD I might be never worſe " than when I was ſhut up of the plague! The not " removing that affliction-frame I ſhall count a greater " bleſſing, and a more proper mercy, than the removing " that afflicted ſtate. — Who cleared up my intereſt in " his Son, ſtrengthened my evidences of his love, and " ſatisfied and aſſured my ſoul of its happy ſtate more " than at all times formerly. I had clearer and ſurer " evidences of divine grace in that patient, ſelf-denying, " ſelf-ſubmitting frame of ſpirit, than in all the duties " that ever I performed. The valley of tears brought " me more ſight of my GOD, and more inſight into my-" ſelf, than ever the valley of viſion, all duties and ordi-" nances had done. When the ſun of righteouſneſs " aroſe upon my ſoul, and chaſed away all the miſts and " fogs of ſelf-will, and creature-loves, then alſo did all " black and diſmal fears, all gloomy doubtings moſt " ſenſibly flee before him. — Who ſupplied my family " from compaſſionate friends with all things needful for " food, phyſic, &c. The LORD return it ſevenfold into " their

but all ſucceeding Schoolmaſters; and by his intereſt among Gentlemen he collected money for the building of a good ſchool, and ſchool-houſe, and alſo a gallery for the convenience of

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" their boſoms! — Who maintained my health in the " midſt of ſickneſs, in the midſt of ſo great a death! I " do not remember that either ſorrow of mind, or ſick- " neſs of body ever prevailed ſo much upon me, during " three months ſecluſion, as to hinder me of my ordinary " ſtudy, repaſt, devotions, or my neceſſary attendance " upon my ſeveral infected rooms, and adminiſtring to " the neceſſities of the ſick. Theſe enſuing Diſcourſes " were then compoſed, which do at leaſt argue that, " through grace, this mind was not altogether diſcom- " poſed, nor body neither. — Who preſerved me and " gave me not up to death! for I judge that I was per- " ſonally viſited with the plague, though not with the " ſickneſs. — Who hath given me a ſincere and ſettled " reſolution, and vehement deſire to live entirely upon, " and to himſelf, which I account to be the only life " of a ſoul, and only worthy to be called a living. Grant " me this prayer, O moſt bleſſed and gracious GOD, for " the ſake of my only and dear Redeemer!

" Thou, O LORD GOD, who art witneſs to all my " thoughts, and words, and works, knoweſt that in truth " and ſoberneſs I publiſh theſe things to the world, not

of the ſcholars in the church. Such a benefactor was he to that town! and ſuch the laſting monuments of his praiſe! A difficulty occurred in this affair which was how to procure a licenſe without ſubſcription to ſuch things as his conſcience could not allow. But this difficulty was removed, for by means of the Lord CONWAY he obtained from Archbiſhop SHELDON a licenſe to teach ſchool any where in his whole Province, and this without ſo much as once ſeeing or waiting upon the Archbiſhop. A licenſe being alſo neceſſary from the Biſhop of the Dioceſe, Mr SHAW got a

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" to advance the reputation of my own ſilly name, or to " be admired of my fellow-creatures, but for the glory " of thine holy name, to beget a good liking of ſo gra- " cious a Creator in all thy poor creatures, who are pre- " judiced againſt thee, and thine holy ſervice; and to " ſtrengthen the hearts of thy ſervants to a moſt firm " and laſting adherence to thee, even in the greateſt ex- " tremities; that thou mayſt be admired in thy ſaints, " and glorified for giving ſuch power, and grace, and " comfort unto men. And *O that men would praiſe the* " *Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the* " *children of men*, Pſalm cvii. 8."

a friend to make his application to Dr FULLER, who was at that time Biſhop of *Lincoln*. This friend putting Mr SHAW's late book occaſioned by the Plague in his family, into the Biſhop's hands, in order to ſatisfy him of the Author's real worth, the Biſhop was ſo pleaſed with the piety, peaceableneſs, humility, and learning diſcovered in the piece, that he gave Mr SHAW a licenſe upon ſuch a ſubſcription as his own ſenſe dictated and inſerted, and added, "That "he was glad to have ſo worthy a man in his "Dioceſe upon any terms." Mr SHAW being thus ſettled in his ſchool, his piety, learning, and temper ſoon raiſed its reputation, and increaſed the number of ſcholars above any ſchool in thoſe parts; ſo that he always kept one, and for a great while two uſhers to aſſiſt him, having often one hundred and ſixty boys or more under his charge. In this ſtation he did excellent ſervice in the education of youth. Several Divines of the Church of *England*, and many Gentlemen eminent in their ſeveral profeſſions, were his ſcholars, and owed their ſchool-learning to his inſtructions.

He

He endeavoured to make the youth that were under his care in love with piety, and to principle them in religion betimes by his good advice, and allure them to it by his good example.

Mr SHAW was affable in his temper, and pleaſant and facetious in his converſation. His method of teaching was winning and eaſy. He had great ſkill in finding out the tempers of his ſcholars, and adapting himſelf to them. He was of a peaceable diſpoſition, and was frequently employed in reconciling differences, and was very ſucceſsful in his endeavours. His charity was univerſal: he relieved the indigent, freely taught poor children where he diſcovered in them a diſpoſition to learning, and afterwards procured them aſſiſtance to perfect their ſtudies at the univerſity. He was of a public and generous ſpirit, and was ready to encourage any good deſigns. He was given to hoſpitality. In principle he was very moderate. He kept a conſtant correſpondence with the Vicar of the place, and though, when the liberty of the Diſſenters was ſettled by Act

of

of Parliament, he licenſed his ſchool for a place of religious worſhip, yet he ſo contrived his meetings as not to interfere with the public aſſemblies, nor leſſen the congregation, preaching at noon between the Sermons at Church, and conſtantly attending there both parts of the day.

His book of *Meditations* was preſented by him to Biſhop BARLOW of *Lincoln*, who is ſaid to be a great reader and judge of books, and a very conſiderable caſuiſt. Upon the peruſal of it the Biſhop wrote Mr SHAW a very reſpectful letter, in which are the following expreſſions *.

"*My Reverend Brother*,

"I HAVE received yours, and this comes, "with my love and reſpects, to bring my "thanks

* See the Letter at large in Dr CALAMY's *Account of the ejected Miniſters*, Page 432, *&c.* ——*N. B.* This Account of Mr SHAW is extracted from that which the Doctor gives of him, and which the Reader will find in the Doctor's *Account, &c.* Page 426—436. And in his Continuation, Page 592, 593.

" thanks for the rational and pious book you
" ſo kindly ſent me. Though my buſineſſes
" are many, and my infirmities more, yet I
" have read all your book, and ſome parts
" of it more than once, with great ſatisfaction
" and benefit. For in your Meditations of
" your Love of GOD and the World (I am
" neither afraid, nor unwilling to confeſs it,
" and make you my confeſſor) you have in-
" ſtructed me in ſeveral things which I knew
" not before, or at leaſt conſidered not ſo ſe-
" rioufly, and ſo often as I might and ought.
" —I ſhall pray for a bleſſing upon you and
" your ſtudies; and your prayers are heartily
" deſired by and for,

" *Your affectionate Friend and Brother,*

" THOMAS LINCOLNE."

Mr SHAW was of middle ſtature. His eye was ſparkling. His converſation was witty, ſavoury, affable, and pertinent. But his greateſt excellency lay in religious diſcourſe, in praying, and preaching. One that knew him well has given this account of him. " I have

" known

known him, says he, spend many days and nights too in religious exercises, when the times were so dangerous that it would hazard an imprisonment for a person not to be drunk, or to be in a bawdy-house or tavern, but to be worshipping GOD with five or six people like-minded with himself. I have sometimes been in Mr SHAW's company for an whole night together, when we have been obliged to steal to the place in the dark, stop out the light, and stop in the voice, by clothing and fast closing the windows, till the first day-break down a chimney has given us notice to be gone. I bless GOD for such seasons. If some say it was needless to do so much; I reply, the life of our souls, and eternity, which only was minded there, require more. I say, I bless GOD for the remembrance of them, and for Mr SHAW at them, whose melting words in prayer I can never forget. He had a most excellent faculty in speaking to GOD with reverence, humility, and an holy awe of his presence, filling his mouth with

" argu-

" arguments. By his ſtrength he had power
" with GOD; he wept and made ſupplication.
" He found him in *Bethel* (ſuch were our aſ-
" ſemblies) and there our GOD ſpake with us.
" I have heard Mr SHAW for two or three
" hours together pour out prayer to GOD
" without tautology or vain repetition, with
" that vigor and fervor, and thoſe holy words
" that imported faith and humble boldneſs,
" as have diſſolved the whole company into
" tears, *&c.*"

In ſhort, a mixture of ſo much learning and humility, wit and judgment, piety and pleaſantneſs, is rarely found in any, as met in Mr SHAW. He lived beloved and died lamented, *January* 22, 169⅚, in the 59th year of his age.

What happy Prophet ſhall his mantle find,
Heir to a double portion of his mind?

Dr WATTS.

THE

PREFACE.

AMONGST the many ſtupendous ſpectacles that are wont to ſurprize and amuſe inquiſitive minds, there ſeems to be nothing in the world of a ſadder and more aſtoniſhing obſervation, than the ſmall progreſs and propagation of the Chriſtian Religion. This I call a ſad obſervation, becauſe Religion is a matter of the moſt weighty and neceſſary importance, without which it is not poſſible for an immortal ſoul to be perfected and made happy: I call it aſtoniſhing, becauſe the Chriſtian Religion hath in itſelf ſuch advantages of recommending itſelf to the minds of men, and contains in it ſuch mighty engines to work them into an hearty compliance with it, and to captivate their reaſon unto itſelf, as no other Religion in the world can with any face pretend to. I do earneſtly, and I ſuppoſe rationally and ſcripturally, hope that this *veritas magna*, thoſe ſacred oracles will yet more prevail, and that the founder of this moſt excellent Religion, who was lifted up upon the croſs, and is now exalted to his throne, will yet draw more men unto himſelf: and this, perhaps, is all

the millennium that we can warrantably look for. But, in the mean time, it is too too evident, that the kingdom of Satan doth more obtain in the world, than the goſpel of CHRIST, either in the letter, or power of it. As to the former, if we will receive the probable conjecture of learned inquirers, we ſhall not find above one ſixth part of the known world yet chriſtianized, or giving ſo much as an external adoration to the crucified JESUS. As to the latter, I will not be ſo bold as to make any arithmetical conjectures, but judge it more neceſſary, and more becoming a charitable and Chriſtian ſpirit, to ſit down in ſecret, and weep over that ſad but true account given in the goſpel, *Few are choſen*, Matt. xx. 16. and again, *Few there be that find it*, Matt. vii. 14. being grieved, after the example of my compaſſionate REDEEMER, *for the hardneſs of their hearts*, and praying with *Joab*, in another caſe, *The Lord make his people an hundred times ſo many more as they be!* 1 Chron. xxi. 3. It is beſides my preſent purpoſe to inquire into the immediate cauſes of the non-propagation of the goſpel in the former ſenſe; only it is eaſy and obvious to gueſs, that few will enter in by *the way of the tree of life*, when the ſame is guarded with a *flaming ſword!* And it were reaſonable to hope, that if the minds of Chriſtians were more purged from a ſelfiſh bitterneſs, fierce animoſity, and arbitrary ſourneſs, and poſſeſſed with a more free, generous, benign, compaſſionate, condeſcending, candid, charitable, and CHRIST-like ſpirit, which would

would be indulgent toward ſuch as are, for the preſent, under a leſs perfect diſpenſation, as our SAVIOUR's was, *Luke* ix. 49, 50, 54, 55. would not impoſe any thing harſh or unneceſſary upon the ſacred and inviolable conſciences of men, but would allow and maintain that liberty to men, which is juſt and natural to them in matters of Religion, and no way forfeited by them; then, I ſay, it might be reaſonable to hope, that the innate power and virtue of the Goſpel would prove moſt victorious; Judaiſm, Mahometiſm, and Paganiſm, would melt away under its powerful influences, and Satan himſelf *fall down as lightning* before it, as naturally as the eye-lids of the morning do chaſe away the blackneſs of the night, when once they are lifted up upon the earth. But my deſign is chiefly to examine the true and proper cauſe of the non-progreſs of the Goſpel, as to the power of it, and its inefficaciouſneſs upon the hearts and conſciences of thoſe that do profeſs it. And now, in finding out the cauſe hereof, I ſhall content myſelf to be wiſe on this ſide heaven, leaving that daring courſe of ſearching the decrees of GOD, and rifling into the hidden rolls of eternity, to them who can digeſt the uncomfortable notion of a ſelf-willed, arbitrarious, and imperious deity; which I doubt is the moſt vulgar apprehenſion of GOD, men meaſuring him moſt groſly and unhappily by a ſelf-ſtandard. And as I dare not ſoar ſo high, ſo neither will I adventure to ſtoop ſo low, as to rake into particulars; which are differently aſſigned, ac-

cording to the different humours and intereſts of them that do aſſign them; each party in the world being ſo exceedingly favourable to itſelf, as to be ready to ſay with *David*, *The earth, and all the inhabitants of it, are diſſolved; I bear up the pillars of it*, Pſalm lxxv. 3. ready to think that the very intereſt of religion in the world is involved in them and their perſuaſions and dogmas, and that the whole church is undone, if but an hair fall from their heads, if they be in the leaſt injured or abridged; which is a piece of very great fondneſs, and indeed the more unpardonable, inaſmuch as it deſtroys the deſign of the goſpel, in confining and limiting the HOLY ONE of *Iſrael*, and making GOD as topical, as he was when he dwelt no where upon earth but at the temple in *Jeruſalem*.

WAVING theſe extremes therefore, I conceive the true cauſe in general of the ſo little prevailing of true religion in the hearts and lives of men, is the falſe notion that men have of it, placing it there where indeed it is not, nor doth conſiſt. That this muſt needs be a cauſe of the not prevailing of the goſpel whereever it is found, I ſuppoſe every body will grant; and that it is almoſt every where to be found, will, I doubt, too evidently appear by that deſcription of the true Chriſtian Religion, which the moſt ſacred author of it, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, made to the poor *Samaritaneſs*; which I have endeavoured briefly to explain, according to the tenor of the goſpel, in this ſmall treatiſe; which I firſt framed for private uſe, in a

ſeaſon

ſeaſon when it was moſt behoveful for me to underſtand the utmoſt ſecrets of my own ſoul, and do the utmoſt ſervice I was able towards the ſalvation of thoſe that were under my roof; expecting every day to render up my own or their ſouls into the arms of our moſt merciful REDEEMER, and to be ſwallowed up in that eternal life, into which true religion daily ſprings up, and will, at length, infallibly conduct the Chriſtian ſoul. This work, thus undertaken, and in a great meaſure then carried on, I have ſince perfected, and do here preſent to the peruſal of my dear country, having made it public for no private end; but, if it might be, to ſerve the intereſt of GOD's glory in the world; which I do verily reckon that I ſhall do, if, by his bleſſing, I may be inſtrumental to undeceive any ſoul miſtaken in ſo high and concerning a matter as religion is, or any way to awaken and quicken any religious ſoul not ſufficiently raviſhed with the unſpeakable glory, nor chearfully enough ſpringing up into the full fruition of eternal life.

WHAT a certain and undefeatable tendency true religion hath towards the eternal happineſs and ſalvation of mens ſouls, will, I hope, evidently appear out of the body of this ſmall treatiſe: but that is not all (though indeed that were enough to commend it to any rational ſoul, that is any whit free and ingenuous, and is not ſo perfectly debauched as to apoſtatize utterly from right reaſon;) for it is alſo the ſincereſt policy imaginable, and the moſt

unerring expedient in the world, for the uniting and eſtabliſhing of a divided and tottering kingdom or commonwealth: to demonſtrate which was the very deſign of this preface. It is well known, O that it were but as well and effectually believed! that *godlineſs is profitable to all things*, and that it hath the promiſes and bleſſings of the *life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. that the right ſeeking of the kingdom of GOD and his righteouſneſs, hath no leſs than all things annexed to it, *Matt.* vi. 33. How unmeaſurable is the body and bulk of that bleſſedneſs, to which all the comforts of this life are to be as an appendix to a volume! But men are apt to ſhuffle off generals; therefore I will deſcend to inſtances, and ſhew in a few particulars, what a mighty influence religion in the power of it, would certainly have for the political happineſs and flouriſhing ſtate of a nation. Wherein I doubt not but to make appear, that not religion, as ſome ſlanderouſly report, but indeed the want of it, is the immediate troubler of every nation, and individual ſociety; yea, and ſoul too; according to that juſt ſaying of the holy Apoſtle, *From whence come wars and fightings? come they not hence, even of your luſts that war in your members?* James iv. 1. Here let me deſire one thing of the reader, and that is, to bear in his mind all along, where he finds the word religion, that I have principally a reſpect to the deſcription given of it in the text, and that I mean thereby,

" a

"a divine principle implanted in the ſoul, ſpring-
"ing up into everlaſting life."

And now I ſhould briefly touch thoſe faults, both in governors towards their ſubjects, ſubjects towards their governors, and towards each other, which do deſtroy the peaceful ſtate, and the ſound and happy conſtitution of a body politic: and indeed I fear it will run me upon ſome inconvenience, if not confuſion, to wave this method. But out of a pure deſire to avoid whatever may be interpretable to ill-will, curioſity, preſumption, or any other bad diſpoſition, and that it may appear to any ingenuous eye, that I am more deſirous to bind up than to rake into ſores, I will expreſsly ſhew how religion would heal the diſtempers of any nation, without taking any more than an implicit notice of the diſtempers themſelves.

First then, It is undoubtedly true that religion, deeply radicated in the nature of princes and governors, would moſt effectually qualify them for the moſt happy way of reigning. Every body knows well enough what an excellent euchraſy*, and lovely conſtitution the Jewiſh polity was in, under the influences of holy *David*, wiſe *Solomon*, devout *Hezekiah*, zealous *Joſiah*, and others of the ſame ſpirit; ſo that I need not ſpend myſelf in that inquiry, and ſo conſequently not upon that argument. Now, there are many ways by which it is

* A Greek word, implying a good temperature and condition, or ſtate of the body.

easy to conceive that religion would rectify and well-temper the spirits of princes.

THIS principle will verily constitute the most noble, heroical, and royal soul, inasmuch as it will not suffer men to find any unhallowed satisfaction in a divine authority, but will be springing up into a GOD-like nature, as their greatest and most perfect glory. It will certainly correct and limit the over-eager affectation of unweildy greatness and unbounded dominion, by teaching them that the most honourable victory in the world is self-conquest, and that the propagation of the image and kingdom of GOD in their own souls is infinitely preferable to the advancement or enlargement of any temporal jurisdiction.

THE same holy principle, being the most genuine offspring of divine love and benignity, will also polish their rough and over-severe natures, instruct them in the most sweet and obliging methods of government by assimilating them to the nature of GOD, who is infinitely abhorrent from all appearance of oppression, and hath most admirably provided that his servants should not be slaves, by making his service perfect freedom.

THE pure and impartial nature of GOD cannot endure superstitious flatterers, or hypocritical professors; and the princes of the earth, that are regenerate into his image, will also estimate men according to GOD; I mean, according to his example who loves nothing but the communications of himself, and according to their participation of his image,

image, which is only amiable and advanceable in the world. What God rejected in his fire-offerings, religion will teach princes to diſguſt in the devotions, as they call them, of their courtiers; I mean, not only the leaven of ſuperſtitious pride and dogged moroſity, but alſo the honey of mercenary proſtrations and fawning adulations.

In a word, This religious principle which makes God its pattern and end, ſprings from him, and is always ſpringing up into him, would ſovereignly heal the diſtempers of ruling by humour, ſelf-intereſt, and arbitrarineſs, and teach men to ſeek the good of the public before ſelf-gratifications. For ſo God rules the world; who, however ſome men ſlander him, I dare ſay, hath made nothing the duty of his creature but what is really the good of it: neither doth he give his people laws on purpoſe that he might ſhew his ſovereignty in making them, or his juſtice in puniſhing the breach of them; much leſs doth he give them any ſuch ſtatutes, as which himſelf would as willingly they broke as kept, ſo he might but exact the penalty.

What I have briefly ſaid concerning political governors, the judicious reader may view over again, and apply to the eccleſiaſtical. For I do verily reckon that if the hearts of theſe men were in that right religious temper and holy order which I have been ſpeaking of, it would plentifully contribute towards the happy and bliſsful ſtate of any kingdom. I will ſpeak freely, let it light where it will, that principle that ſprings up into popular ap-

plauſe, ſecular greatneſs, worldly pomp and bravery, fleſh-pleaſing, or any kind of ſelf-exaltation, which is manifold, is really contradiſtinct from that divine principle, that religious nature that ſprings up into everlaſting life. And certainly, notwithſtanding all the recriminations and ſelf-juſtifications which are, on all hands, uſed to ſhuffle off the guilt, theſe governors muſt lay aſide their ſullen pride, as well as the people their proud ſullenneſs, before the church of GOD be healed in its breaches, purged of Antichriſtianiſm, or can probably arrive at any ſound conſtitution or perfect ſtature.

BUT I ſuppoſe religion will not have its full and deſirable effect upon a nation, by healing the ſickly heads of it, except it be like the holy oil poured upon the ſacrificer's head, which ran down alſo upon the ſkirts of his garments, *Pſalm* cxxxiii. 2. Therefore,

SECONDLY, It is indiſpenſibly requiſite for the thorough healing and right conſtituting of any political body, that the ſubjects therein be thus divinely principled. This will not fail to diſpoſe them rightly towards their governors, and towards one another.

1. TOWARDS their governors. There are many evil and perverſe diſpoſitions in ſubjects towards their rulers; all which religion is the moſt excellent expedient to rectify.

THE firſt and fundamental diſtemper here ſeems to be a want of due reverence toward theſe vicegerents of GOD upon earth; which eaſily grows up

up into ſomething poſitive, and becomes a ſecret wiſhing of evil to them. This fault, as light as ſome eſteem it, was ſeverely puniſhed in Queen *Michal*, who deſpiſed her lord King *David* in her heart, and her barren womb went down to its ſiſter the grave under great reproach, 2 *Sam.* vi. 16. *Prov.* xxx. 16. And if an ordinary hatred be ſo foully interpreted by the holy Apoſtle, *Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer*, 1 John iii. 15. ſurely diſloyal and malignant diſpoſitions towards governors muſt needs have a fouler face; and we may ſay, by a parity of reaſon, *Whoſoever hateth his prince is a rebel and a regicide.* Now this diſtemper, as fundamental and epidemical as it is, the ſpirit of true religion will heal, and I think I may ſay that only: for I know nothing in the world that hath, nay, I know that nothing in the world hath that ſovereignty and dominion over the diſpoſitions and affections of the ſoul, as this principle thoroughly ingrafted in the ſoul, doth challenge to itſelf. This alone can frame the heart of man into that beautiful temper and complection of love and loyalty, that he will not curſe the king, no not in his conſcience; no not though he were well aſſured that there were no winged meſſenger to tell the matter, *Eccleſ.* x. 20.

ANOTHER diſtemper in ſubjects, reſpective to their governors, is impatience of bearing a yoke; which is an evil ſo natural to the proud and imperious ſpirit of man, that I believe it were ſafe to affirm, that every irreligious ſubject could be well content

content to be a prince; however there may be many who, utterly despairing of such an event, may with the fox in the fable profess they care not for it. From this principle of pride and impatience of subjection, I suspect it is that the rigid Chiliasts do so scornfully declaim against, and so loudly decry the carnal ordinances of magistracy and ministry: not that they do verily seek the advancement of CHRIST's kingdom (which indeed every disorderly, tumultuous, proud, impatient soul doth, *ipso facto*, deny and destroy) but of themselves. To whom one might justly apply the censure which *Pharaoh* injuriously passes upon the children of *Israel*, with a little alteration, *Ye are proud, therefore ye say, Let us go, and do sacrifice to the Lord*, Exod. v. 17. This distemper the power of religion would excellently heal, by mortifying ambitious inclinations, and quieting the impatient turbulences of the fretful and envious soul, by fashioning the heart to a right humble frame and chearful submission to every ordination of GOD. You will see in this treatise that a right religious soul, powerfully springing up into everlasting life, hath no list nor leisure to attend to such poor attainments and sorry acquests, as the lording it over other men; being feelingly acquainted with a life far more excellent than the most princely, and being overpowered with a supreme and sovereign good, which charms all its inordinate ragings, and laying hold upon all its faculties, draws them forth by a pleasing violence, unto a most zealous pursuit of itself. A principle

of

of humility makes men good ſubjects; and they that are indeed probationers for another world, may very well behave themſelves with a noble diſdain towards all the glories and preferments of this.

THE laſt diſtemper that I ſhall name in ſubjects towards their governors is diſcontents about conceited miſ-government and male-adminiſtration; which commonly ſpring from an evil and ſiniſter interpretation of the rulers actions, and are attended with an evil and tumultuous zeal for relaxation. Now this diſtemper, as great as it is and deſtructive to the well-being of a body politic, true religion would heal both root and branch. Were that noble part and branch of the Chriſtian religion, univerſal charity, rightly ſeated in the ſoul, it would not ſuffer the ſon of the bond-woman to inherit with it; it would caſt out thoſe ireful jealouſies, ſour ſuſpicions, harſh ſurmiſes, and imbittered thoughts which lodge in unhallowed minds, and diſplay itſelf in a moſt amicable ſweetneſs and gentleneſs of diſpoſition, in fair gloſſes upon doubtful actions, friendly cenſures or none at all, kind extenuations of greater faults and covering of leſſer; for this is the proper genius of this divine principle, to be very unbelieving of evil or eaſily entertaining of good reports, gladly interpreting all things to a good meaning that will poſſibly admit of ſuch a conſtruction; or if you will, in the Apoſtle's phraſe, *Charity is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil*, 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

AND

And as charity doth cut up this root of diſcontents, ſo will faith allay and deſtroy theſe diſcontents themſelves, which are about miſ-government and ill-adminiſtration. This noble principle adminiſters eaſe and ſatisfaction to the ſoul, if ſhe happen to be provoked: for it will not ſuffer her long to ſtand gazing upon ſecond cauſes, but carries her up in a ſeaſonable contemplation to the ſupreme cauſe, without whom no diſorder could ever befal the world; and there commands her to repoſe herſelf, in the boſom of infinite wiſdom and grace, waiting for a comfortable iſſue. He may well be vexed indeed, that has ſo much reaſon as to obſerve the many monſtrous diſorders which are in the world, and not ſo much faith as to eye the inſcrutable providence of a benign and all-wiſe God, who permitteth the ſame with reſpect to the moſt beautiful end and bleſſed order imaginable. Though faith abhors the blaſphemy of laying blame upon God, yet it ſo fixes the ſoul upon him, and cauſes her ſo to eye his hand and end in all male-adminiſtrations of men, that ſhe hath no leiſure to fall out with men, or quarrel with inſtruments.

These diſcontents, I ſaid, were frequently attended with an evil and ſeditious zeal for relaxation, diſcovering itſelf in ſecret treacherous conſpiracies, and many times in boiſterous and daring attempts. Theſe are at the firſt ſight ſo directly contrary to the character given of religious men, namely, *the quiet of the land*, Pſalm xxxv. 20. and

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the genius of religion, which is wholly made up of *love, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faithfulneſs, meekneſs, temperance, mercy, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, forbearance, forgiveneſs, charity, thankfulneſs, wiſdom*, Gal. v. 22, 23. Col. iii. 12—16. that it is eaſy to conceive that religion, in the power of it, would certainly heal this evil diſeaſe alſo. There are many pretenders to religion, whoſe complaint is ſtill concerning oppreſſion and perſecution, their cry is all for liberty and deliverance; but to make it the more paſſable and plauſible, they ſtile it the advancement of the kingdom of CHRIST. This pretence is ſo fair, but withal ſo deceitful, that I count it worth my time to ſpeak a little more liberally to it. And here I do from the very bottom of my ſoul proteſt, that I account the advancement of the glory of GOD and the kingdom of CHRIST, to be the moſt deſirable thing in the world; and that it is highly becoming the greateſt ſpirits upon earth to employ their very utmoſt zeal and diligence to aſſiſt the accompliſhment thereof: yea, ſo utterly do I abhor Irreligion and Atheiſm, that, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks (*Phil.* i. 18.) in ſomewhat a like caſe, I do verily rejoice that CHRIST is profeſſed, though it be but pretended, and that truth is owned, though it be not owned in truth. I will further add, that the oppreſſing and obſtructing of the external progreſs and propagation of the goſpel is hated of CHRIST, and to be lamented of all true Chriſtians. Yea, I will further allow men a due ſenſibleneſs of their perſonal oppreſſions and injuries,

injuries, and a natural warrantable desire to be redeemed from them. And now having thus purged myself, I entreat the Christian reader patiently and without prejudice to suffer me to speak somewhat closely to this matter: yea, I do verily assure myself that I shall be accepted, or at least indulged by all free and ingenuous spirits, who are rightly acquainted with the genius of the Christian religion, and do prefer truth before interest.

And, first, for the complaint that is mostly concerning oppression and persecution: certainly religion, if it did rightly prevail in our hearts, would very much heal this distemper, if not by a perfect silencing of these complaints, yet surely by putting them into another tune. I reckon that religion quite silences these complaints, when it engages the soul so entirely in serving the end of God in afflictions, and in a right improvement of them for religious purposes, that she list not to spend herself in fruitless murmurings and unchristian indignations. As fire seizeth upon every thing that is combustible, and makes it fuel for itself, and a predominant humour in the body converts into its own substance whatever is convertible, and makes it nourishment to itself; so doubtless this spirit of burning, this divine principle, if it were rightly predominant in the soul, would nourish itself by all things that lie in its way, though they seem never so heterogeneous and hard to be digested; and rather than want meat it would, with *Samson*, fetch it out of the very eater himself. But if religion

gion ſhould not utterly ſilence theſe complainings, by rendering the ſoul thus forgetful of the body, and regardleſs of its ſmart, in compariſon of the happy advantage that may be made of it; yet, methinks, it ſhould draw the main ſtream of theſe tears into another channel, and put theſe complaints into another tune. It is very natural to the religious ſoul to make GOD all things unto itſelf, to lay to heart the intereſt of truth and holineſs more than any particular intereſt of its own; and to bewail the diſſervice done to GOD more than any ſelf-incommodation. Muſt not he needs be a good ſubject to his prince, who can more heartily mourn that GOD's laws are not kept, than that he himſelf is kept under? that can be more grieved that men are cruel, than that they kill him; that can be more troubled becauſe there are oppreſſions in the world, than becauſe he himſelf is oppreſſed? ſuch ſubjects religion alone can make.

As for the cry that is made for liberty and deliverance; I confeſs I do not eaſily apprehend what is more, or more naturally deſirable than true liberty: yea, I believe there are many devout and religious ſouls that, from a right noble and generous principle, and out of a ſincere reſpect to the author and end of their creation, are almoſt intemperately ſtudious of it, do prefer it above all preferments, or any thing that may be properly called ſenſual, and would purchaſe it with any thing that they can poſſibly part with. But yet that I may a little moderate if not quite ſtifle this cry, I muſt

freely

freely profeſs that I do apprehend too much of ſenſuality generally in it; becauſe this liberty is commonly abſtracted from the proper end of it, and deſired merely as a naturally convenient good, and not under a right religious conſideration. Self-love is the very heart and centre of the animal life; and doubtleſs this natural principle is as truly covetous of ſelf-preſervation, and freedom from all inconveniences, grievances, and confinements, as any religious principle can be. And therefore I may well allude to our SAVIOUR's words, and ſay, *If you love and deſire deliverance*, only under the notion of a natural good, *what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans the ſame?* Matt. v. 47. But were this divine principle rightly exerciſing its ſovereignty in the ſoul, it would value all things, and all eſtates and conditions, only as they have a tendency to the advancement and nouriſhment of itſelf. With what an ordinary, not to ſay diſdainful eye, would the religious ſoul look upon the faireſt ſelf-accommodations in the world; and be ready to ſay within itſelf, What is a mere abſtract deliverance from afflictions worth? wherein is a naked freedom from afflictions to be accounted of? will this make me a bleſſed man? was not profane and impudent *Ham* delivered from the deluge of water, as well as his brethren? were not the filthy ſhameleſs daughters of *Lot* delivered from the deluge of fire, as well as their father? And yet we are ſo far from riſing up and calling theſe people bleſſed, that the heart of every chaſte and modeſt

modeſt Chriſtian is ready to riſe againſt the very mention of their names, when he remembers how both the one and the other, though in a different ſenſe, diſcovered their father's nakedneſs. If we did really value ourſelves by our ſouls, and our ſouls themſelves by what they poſſeſs of the image of GOD, if we did rightly prefer the advancement of the divine life before the gratification of the animal, it is eaſy to conceive how we ſhould prefer patience before proſperity, faith in GOD before the favour of men, ſpiritual purity before temporal pleaſures or preferments, humility before honour, the denial of ourſelves before the approbation of others, the advancement of GOD's image before the advancement of our own names, an opportunity of exerciſing gracious diſpoſitions before the exerciſing of any temporal power or ſecular authority; and, in a word, the diſplaying of the beauty, glory, and perfections of GOD, before health, wealth, liberty, livelihood, and life itſelf. We ſhould certainly be more indifferently affected towards any condition, whether proſperity or adverſity, and not be ſo fond of the one, nor weary of the other, if we did verily value them only by the tendency that they had to further religion, and advance the life of CHRIST in our ſouls. This would certainly make men more ſincerely ſtudious to read GOD's end in afflicting them, and leſs longing to ſee the end of their afflictions.

AND as for treacheries, plottings, invaſions, uſurpations, rebellions, and that tumultuous zeal for relaxation,

relaxation, which this impatience of oppreſſion, and fondneſs of deliverance do ſo often grow up into, I dare ſay there is nothing like religion, in the power of it, for the effectual healing of them. The true ſpirit of religion is not ſo weary of oppreſſion, though it be by ſinful men, as it is abhorrent from deliverance, if it be by ſinful means. May I not be allowed to allude to the Apoſtle and ſay, whereas there is amongſt you this zeal, contention, and faction, *Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* 1 Cor. iii. 3. Is not this the ſame which a mere natural man would do, ſtrive and ſtruggle, by right and by wrong, to redeem himſelf from whatſoever is grievous and galling to the intereſt of the fleſh? Might it not be reaſonably ſuppoſed that if religion did but diſplay itſelf aright in the powerful actings of faith, hope, and humility, it would quench this ſcalding zeal, and calm theſe tempeſtuous motions of the ſoul, and make men rather content to be delivered up to the adverſary, tho' the fleſh ſhould by him be deſtroyed, ſo the ſpirit might be ſaved, and the divine life advanced in the way of the LORD. O how dear and precious are the poſſeſſion and practice of faith, patience, humility, and ſelf-denial to a godly ſoul, in compariſon of all the joys and toys, treaſures, pleaſures, eaſe and honour of the world, the ſafety and liberty of the fleſh! How much more then, when theſe muſt be accompliſhed by wicked means, and purchaſed at the rate of GOD's diſpleaſure? And becauſe the kingdom of CHRIST is ſo often alledged

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o defend and patronize these strange fervors and renzies, let me here briefly record to all that shall ead these lines, the way and method of CHRIST imself in propagating his own kingdom. It will ot be denied but that CHRIST was infinitely stu-ious to promote his own kingdom in the best and ost proper sense: but I no where read that he ver attempted it by force or fraud, by violent op-osition or crafty insinuation. Nay, he reckoned hat his kingdom was truly promoted when these umultuous, impatient, imperious, proud lusts of nen were mortified. Nothing had been more easy with him, considering his miraculous power, in-allible wisdom, and the mighty interest and party which he could by these have made for himself in he world, than to have raised his own kingdom pon the ruins of the *Roman*, and to have quite huffled *Cesar* out of the world: but indeed nothing more impossible, considering the perfect innocency and infinite sacredness of his temper, nor any thing more contradictious, considering the proper notion of his kingdom; which he professes not to be se-cular, and so not to be maintained by fighting: but if you would know in what sense he was a King, he himself seems to intimate it in his answer to *Pilate*, *Thou sayest that I am a king; to this end was I born, that I should bear witness unto the truth*, John xviii. 37. So then it seems whereever there are truth and holiness predominant, there is CHRIST really inthroned, and actually triumphant. Where religion doth vitally inform, animate, and actuate

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mens ſouls, it doth make them rightly to underſtand that the kingdom of CHRIST is not the thriving of parties, the ſtrengthening of factions, the advancement of any particular intereſt, though it ſeem to be of never ſo evangelical a complection; no, nor yet the proſelyting of the world to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, or of the Chriſtian world to the purer and more reformed profeſſion of it, though theſe latter would be a great external honour to the perſon of CHRIST: but that it is moſt properly and happily propagated in the ſpirits of men; and that whereever there are faith, patience, humility, ſelf-denial, contempt of this world, and pregnant hopes of a better, pure obedience to GOD, and ſincere benignity to men, here and there is the kingdom of GOD, CHRIST regnant, and the goſpel in the power and triumph of it. And may not theſe things be, and be moſt conſpicuouſly, in a perſecuted condition of the church? That certainly was an high inſtance of the mighty power of the divine life in our bleſſed SAVIOUR, which the Apoſtle *Peter* records of him, who *when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not; but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly*, 1 Pet. ii. 23. The ſame divine principle dwelling plentifully in our ſouls, would inſtruct us to the ſame behaviour, according to the precept given by the ſame Apoſtle, *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwiſe bleſſing, &c.* 1 Pet. iii. 9. How vainly do men dream that they ſerve the intereſt and advance the kingdom of

CHRIST

CHRIST by fierce and raging endeavours to caſt off every yoke that galls them, and kicking againſt every thorn that pricks them, when indeed they ſerve the intereſt of the fleſh, and do, under a fine cloke, gratify the mere animal life and ſacrifice to ſelf-love, which is as covetous of freedom from all retrenchments and confinements as religion itſelf can be. It is ſaid indeed that when the churches had reſt they were *edified and multiplied*, Acts ix. 31. but when they ſuffer *according to the will of God*, they are then glorified: for *the ſpirit of glory and of God reſteth upon them*, 1 Pet. iv. 14. as the Apoſtle *Paul* profeſſes of himſelf in that moſt noble and heroical paſſage of his to the *Corinthians*; *Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me*, 2 Cor. xii. 9.

SECONDLY, Religion will not fail rightly to diſpoſe the hearts of ſubjects towards one another; and that whether they be of the ſame way and judgment with themſelves, or different. I dare not aſſert that it would make them all of the ſame way and mind; neither do I believe it would: yet I am confident it would do more towards this catholic union, than all the laws and ſeverities in the world can. Mutual forbearance and forgiveneſs, Chriſtian kindneſs and diſcreet condeſcenſion, are the moſt warrantable and moſt effectual method for introducing uniformity, and unanimity too, which is much better, into the church of CHRIST. But, however, religion would certainly give a right diſ-

poſition,

poſition, and teach men a right behaviour reſpective to each other, whether friends or diſſenters.

THIS principle would teach men to love their friends and accomplices only *in the Lord*, as his members, not as their own partizans. Are not they ſtrangely devoted to intereſt that will vindicate any thing in a partizan, which they will declaim againſt in a diſſenter? And yet how is the ſacred name of Chriſtian friendſhip reproached every where by reaſon of this partiality! How much better did true religion inſtruct the great Apoſtle, *to know no man after the fleſh*, 2 Cor. v. 16. no not CHRIST himſelf?

THE ſame principle would not fail to cure the diſtempers of men reſpective to thoſe that are of a different way and judgment from themſelves; whether of Proteſtants towards Proteſtants, or Proteſtants and Papiſts one towards another. It would heal the diſtempered affections and behaviours of Proteſtants towards Proteſtants. Were men thoroughly baptized into the ſpirit of love and wiſdom, which are ſo livelily portrayed by the Apoſtles St *Paul* and St *James*, that one might well be enamoured of the very deſcription: how certainly would all oppreſſions, law-ſuits, diſputations about unprofitable and indeterminable points, either be ſuppreſſed or ſanctified, either not be, or not be vexatious? Not to ſpeak of the oppreſſions done by over-reaching, ſtealing, lying, falſe witneſs-bearing, ſlanderous detractions, envious ſuggeſtions, and malignant diſſemination of doubtful ſuſpicions, by which commonly

monly poor men oppreſs the rich; all which true religion abhors. There is a great oppreſſion that goes uncontroled in the world, which is, by the cruel engroſſings and covetous inſatiable tradings of richer men. What theſe are intentionally I will not ſay, but that they are really and eventually as great oppreſſions as thoſe inhuman depopulations, and ſqueezing exactions, which are ſo much inveighed againſt, I doubt not. But, be they what they will, or be they excuſed how they will, I am confident that this divine principle that powerfully ſprings up into everlaſting life, would mightily relieve the world in this reſpect; in that it would moderate mens deſires of corruptible riches, forbid them to ſeek the things of this world any more or any otherwiſe than in conſiſtency with, and ſubſerviency to their primary and moſt diligent ſeeking of the kingdom of GOD; it would make men ſeek the wealth of others even as their own, and make private advantages ſtoop to the public good. I do verily believe, that if there were none but good men in *England*, there would be no poor men there. Civil laws may provide for the maintenance of the poor; but the law of divine love, a principle of religion, if it were univerſally obeyed, would make men ſo nobly regardleſs of earthly accommodations, that there would ſoon be room enough for all men to thrive into a ſufficient ſtature; and then, being ſo grown, they would covet no more.

IN law-ſuits, if there were any, men would ſeek the advancement of truth, and not of their own cauſe and intereſt diſtinct from it.

And O how excellently would it ſtill the noiſe of axes and hammers about the temple of God! It would take men off from vain ſpeculations and much eagerneſs about unneceſſary opinions, by employing them in more ſubſtantial and important ſtudies. The very being of religion in the ſoul would indeed decide a world of controverſies, which the ſchools have long laboured in vain to determine. For I reckon that theſe ſcholaſtical wars, fitly called Polemics, like thoſe civil diſſentions ſpoken of by the Apoſtle *James*, chap. iv. 1. do, for the moſt part, ſpring from mens luſts that war in their members, ſuch as pride, curioſity, laſciviency of wit, diſobedience, and unſubduedneſs of underſtanding, and the like. I have obſerved with great grief, how the ſpirits of many men, I had almoſt ſaid ſects of men, run out wholly into diſputes about ceremonies, *pro* and *con*, about church government, about what is orthodox and what is heterodox, about the true and the falſe church (which commonly they judge by ſomething external, and indeed ſeparable from the eſſence of a true church;) and hereabout are their zeal, their conference, and their very prayers themſelves moſtly beſtowed. Who can doubt but that religion, in the power of it, would find men ſomething elſe to do? yea, and if it could not perfectly determine theſe niceties, yet it would much heal our diſſentions about them, and bring tears to quench the ſtrange and unnatural heats that are amongſt us, and cauſe ſuch dreadful inflammations in our bowels.

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But it may seem that there is such a fatal enmity and irreconcileable feud betwixt Papists and Protestants, that nothing, no not religion itself, can heal it. And truly if we suppose that it is religion that engages both parties in this enmity, I think it will prove incurable; but God forbid that this pure offspring of heaven should be so blasphemed! It is not religion, but indeed the want of it, that begets this implacable animosity, whatever is pretended. Cruel religion, bloody religion, selfish religion, envious and revengeful religion! Who can choose but cry out of the blasphemy of this contradiction at the very first hearing? Nay, I dare affirm it without hesitation, that the more religious any Protestant or Papist is, the more abhorrent he is from brutish savageness, wicked revenge, and deviliſh hatred. The church of *Rome* judges the reformed heretics are not fit to live; and why? not because they live not well, but because they cannot think and believe as they do. And is this the genuine product of true religion? nothing less. For a desire of ruling over mens consciences, and of subjecting the faith of others to themselves, is certainly compatible to a mere natural man, nay, to the devil himself, who is as lordly, cruel, and imperious as any other. The reformed churches, on the other hand are, I doubt, generally more offended at the Papists for their persecutions of them, than for their real persecuting and crucifying Christ afresh by their sins; and so, consequently, do rather write and fight against them, than either pity

or pray for them. I hope there are as many well-ſpirited Chriſtians in *England*, at leaſt proportionably, as in any church upon earth; and yet I fear there are far more that could wiſh the Papiſts out of this world, than that earneſtly deſire that they might be fitted for, and ſo counted worthy of a better. And doth this ſpring from a religious principle, think ye, or a ſelfiſh? Doth it not agree well to the animal life, and natural ſelf, to be tender of its own intereſts and concernments, to wiſh well to its own ſafety, to defend itſelf from violence? May I not allude to our SAVIOUR's words, and ſay, *If ye hate them that hate you, how can that be accounted religious? Do not even the publicans the ſame?* Matt. v. 46. I doubt we know not ſufficiently what ſpirit we ſhould be of. The power of religion, rightly prevailing in the ſoul, would mold us into another kind of temper; it would teach us as well to love, and pity, and pray for Papiſts, as to hate Popery. I know the prophecy indeed, that the beaſt and the falſe prophet ſhall be caſt alive into the lake burning with brimſtone, and the remnant ſhall be ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat upon the horſe, *Rev.* xix. 20. but, inaſmuch as that ſword is ſaid to proceed *out of his mouth*, Rev. xix. 21. I would gladly interpret it of *the word of God*, Eph. vi. 17. which kills men unto ſalvation. However, let the interpretation of that text, and others of the like importance, be what it will, I reckon it very unſafe to turn all the prophecies and threatnings of GOD into prayers,

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eſt haply we ſhould be found to contribute to the damning of mens ſouls. Yea, when all is ſaid concerning the reprobating decrees of GOD, and his eſſential inflexible punitive juſtice, and all thoſe texts that ſeem to ſpeak of GOD's revenging himſelf with delight, are interpreted to the utmoſt harſhneſs of meaning that the cruel wit of man can invent; yet it remains a ſealed, and to me a ſweet truth, *I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth, ſaith the Lord God*, Ezek. xviii. 32. and again, *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked*, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Wherefore, to wave all thoſe dreadful gloſſes (that do rather deſcribe the bitter and revengeful temper of man that makes them, than interpret the pure and perfect nature of GOD upon whom they are made) let us attend to that beautiful character that is every where given of religion, which is our higheſt concernment, in the perſon of *Moſes*, of *Paul*, and of CHRIST JESUS himſelf, the author and exemplar of it; who by his incarnation, life, and death, abundantly demonſtrated the infinite benignity and compaſſionate ardors of his ſoul towards us, when we were worſe than Papiſts, as being out of a poſſibility of ſalvation without him; and *let that mind be in us, which was in him alſo*, Phil. ii. 5. Though it be not directly our SAVIOUR's meaning in my text, yet I believe it is reductively, that this pure and divine principle, religion, ſprings up into everlaſting life, not only our own, but other mens alſo. But, however religion is deſcribed, ſure I am it is

moſt unnatural to the religious ſoul that is regenerated into the pure ſpirit of piety, pity, and univerſal charity, to be of a cruel, fierce, revengeful, damning diſpoſition. And therefore whatever are the ranting and wrathful ſtrains of ſome mens devotions, I beſeech the reader to endeavour with me, that charity towards mens ſouls may go along in conjunction with zeal and piety towards GOD, when we preſent ourſelves before the throne of his grace: and ſo, I am confident, it will if we pray ſincerely to this purpoſe, namely, "That GOD "would cauſe the wickedneſs of the wicked to "come to an end, that he would conſume the An-"tichriſt, but convert the Papiſt, and make the "wonderers after the beaſt to become followers "of the Lamb!" I doubt there are many that think they can never be too liberal in wiſhing ill to the Papiſts, nay, they count it a notable argument of a good Proteſtant, I had almoſt ſaid an evidence of grace, to be very raging and invective againſt them. Alas! how miſerably do we bewray ourſelves in ſo doing, to be nothing leſs than what we pretend to by doing it. For are not we ourſelves herein antichriſtian, whilſt we complain of their cruelties, our own ſouls, in the very act, boiling over with revengeful and ſcalding affections? If we do indeed abhor their cruelty, becauſe it is contrary to the holy precepts of the goſpel, and the true kingdom of CHRIST, we ought to be as jealous at the ſame time leſt any thing like unto it ſhould be found in ourſelves: otherwiſe are we not carnal?

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carnal? For mere nature, as I have often ſaid, will abhor any thing that is contrary to itſelf, and will not willingly ſuffer its delicate intereſt to be touched. The Apoſtle tells us, that no man ſpeaking by the *Spirit of Chriſt*, *calleth Chriſt accurſed*, 1 Cor. xii. 3. but I doubt it is common to curſe Antichriſt, and yet by a ſpirit that is antichriſtian, I mean carnal, ſelfiſh, cruel, and uncharitable. For there is a ſpiritual Antichriſt, or, if you will, in the Apoſtle's phraſe, a *ſpirit of Antichriſt*, 1 John iv. 3. as well as a political Antichriſt; and I doubt the former prevails moſt in the world, though it be the leaſt diſcerned and banned. Men do by Antichriſt as they do by the devil, defy him in words, but entertain him in their hearts, run away from the appearance of him, and, in the mean time, can be well enough content to be all that in very deed which the devil and Antichriſt is. All this evidently appears to be for want of the true power and ſpirit of religion which I commend for ſo great a healer, even the τὸ κατὰ of our diſtempers.

PERHAPS no Papiſt will find in his heart to read this epiſtle written by a heretic; yet poſſibly too, ſome one or other may: therefore I will adventure briefly to preſcribe this ſame medicinal divinity to them alſo; though perhaps I might be excuſed upon other account, all that which I have hitherto ſaid to diſtempered Proteſtants being rightly enough, *mutatis mutandis*, applicable to them. But moreover, whereas they value their church, and the truth and rightneſs of it, by its univerſality and

proſperity; the power of religion would make men to value themſelves and their adherents, only by the divine impreſſions of piety and purity, and to account ſuch only worthy of the glorious title of apoſtolical, and children of GOD, who are ſincere followers of the Apoſtles wherein they were followers of CHRIST, namely, in *true holineſs and righteouſneſs*. Are they induſtrious and zealous for the proſelyting of the world, and ſpreading of their intereſt far and near? And are not all wicked men, yea, and the devil himſelf ſo too? The faireſt and moſt flouriſhing ſtate of a church is nothing to GOD, and ſo conſequently not to a godly ſoul, in compariſon of thoſe excellent divine beauties wherewith religion adorneth the world. But whereas the greateſt complaint, and the moſt dreadful charge which the Proteſtants bring againſt the Papiſts, is their immanity and moſt unchriſtian cruelty, exerciſed againſt all whom they can but make a ſhift to eſteem heretics; and they, on the other hand, alledge, that the intereſt of religion, and the catholic faith doth require it, and that they do not ſo properly murder men, as ſacrifice them to the honour of GOD: it will be proper to ſpend a little time, at leaſt, to clear religion of this blame; that as wiſdom is at all times juſtified of, and in her children, ſo ſhe may be ſometimes juſtified by them, eſpecially when the aſperſions are ſo monſtrous foul. And indeed ſhe hath ſufficiently inſtructed us how to juſtify her from all ſuch imputations; having ſo fairly portrayed herſelf by the

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en of the Apoſtle *James*, both negatively and af-rmatively. She is void of *ſtrife, envyings, bitter-eſs, and every evil work*; but ſhe is *pure, peaceable, entle, eaſy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy*, James iii. 14—17. This is the proper deſcription of hea-venly wiſdom, or pure religion: and O that all Chriſtians would eſtimate themſelves to be wiſe according to their conſonancy and conformity thereunto! then I would eaſily believe, that none would be Papiſts in practice, whatever they might be in opinion. What, Sirs, is the GOD of the Chriſtians become like a devil, that he ſhould de-light in cruelty, and drink the blood of men? Is the butchering of reaſonable creatures that reaſon-able ſervice which he requires? *Rom.* xii. 1. Is the living ſacrifice of your own bodies turned into the dead ſacrifice of other mens? It was wont to be ſaid, *What communion hath Chriſt with Belial?* 2 Cor. vi. 15. And is *the Prince of peace* now be-come very Satan, the author of enmity, malignity, confuſion, and every evil work? Did he ſhed his blood for his enemies, to teach us that goodly leſ-ſon of ſhedding the blood of ours? Did he come *to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt*, Luke xix. 10. to ſet us an example that we might *ſeek to deſtroy*, and that only to repair our own loſſes? Be it ſo; that the Proteſtant churches have apoſtatized from you: this, I hope, is not a greater crime than the apoſtaſy of mankind from GOD, which yet he ex-piated, not with the blood of the apoſtates, but

with his own. Religion was formerly a principle *ſpringing up into eternal life.* How is the world changed, that it ſhould now be a principle ſpringing up into maſſacres, and temporal death? or is religion now become a principle ſpringing up into ſecular power, worldly dominion, temporal greatneſs, and all manner of fleſhly accommodations? This was of old the deſcription of ſenſuality, and a heathen genius, *for after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek*, Matt. vi. 32. Are there ſo many mighty engines in the goſpel to engage the hearts of men to believe, profeſs, and obey it, and muſt they all now give place to fire and ſword? Are theſe the only goſpel methods of winning men to the catholic faith? What! are we wiſer for CHRIST, or more zealous than he himſelf was? Did he forbid fire from heaven, *Luke* ix. 55. and will you fetch it even from hell to conſume Diſſenters? Did he ſheath his ſword that was drawn in his own defence, and ſet a dreadful ſeal upon it too, *All they that take the ſword ſhall periſh with the ſword*, Matt. xxvi. 52. and will you adventure to draw it in a way of revenge and perſecution, and count it meritorious too, as if you ſhould therefore never periſh becauſe you take it? Is it not written in your Bibles, as well as ours, that *no murderer ſhall enter into the kingdom of God?* Gal. v. 21. And do you think by murders to propagate this kingdom upon earth, and have a more abundant entrance into it yourſelves hereafter? Can hell dwell with heaven? Shall bloody cruelty ever

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come to lodge in the bosom, or lie down in the sacred arms of eternal love? Be not deceived, Sirs, with a false heaven; but take this for an indubitable and self-evidencing aphorism of truth, No soul of man hath any more of heaven, no nor ever shall have, than he hath of God, and of his pure, placable, patient, benign, and gracious nature. And this is that everlasting life which a religious principle is always springing up into; so that it hereby appears plainly, that religion, in the power of it, would heal these feverish distempers also, and so restore a most excellent constitution, both personal and political.

It may seem possibly that I have toiled too much in these discoveries; and haply my pains may prove ungrateful to many: but may it please almighty God that they may prove vindicative of religion, restorative of the sickly and lapsed ecclesiastical or political state, yea, or medicinal and profitable to any single soul of man, I shall venture to estimate it against an age of pains. And if it should prove that by all this toil I have *caught nothing*, Luke v. 5. as the weary disciples complained of old, nevertheless being well assured that I have a word of God for my encouragement, I will *let down the net* once again, and so finish these epistolary pains with an earnest hortatory address to all that shall peruse them.

Let nothing satisfy your souls, Christians, let nothing administer rest or settlement to your hearts, that is common to the natural man, or compatible

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to the mere animal life. There are a great many high ſtrains of zeal and ſeeming devotion, by which many men judge themſelves to be ſome great ones, and concerning which they are ready to ſay, Theſe things are the great power of GOD; which, if they be well looked into, will be found to grow upon no better root than natural ſelf, and to ſpring from no higher principle than this animal life. It is impoſſible for me to give an exact catalogue of all theſe: many of them I have occaſionally recorded in the latter end of the enſuing treatiſe; to which yet many more might be added, if I had a fair opportunity. But at preſent let me in general commend to you this deſcription given by our SAVIOUR of true religion, as the rule whereby I do earneſtly entreat you faithfully to examine yourſelves, your actions, affections, zeal, confidence, profeſſions, performances. Let me ſpeak freely; all pomp of worſhip, all ſpeculative knowledge, though never ſo orthodox, is as dear to the animal life as the divine: and all external models of devotion, ſubmiſs confeſſions, devout hymns, pathetical prayers, raptures of joy, much zeal to reform indecencies in worſhip or ſuperſtitions, a fierce raging againſt the political Antichriſt, do as well agree to a natural man as a ſpiritual, and may be as fairly acted over to ſee to, by a mere ſelfiſh carnal principle, as by that which is truly divine. When *Diogenes* trampled upon *Plato*'s ſtately bed, ſaying *calco Platonis faſtum*, it was anſwered him very ſharply, *ſed majore faſtu*, he was prouder in tread-

ing upon it, than *Plato* was in lying upon it. I doubt it may be applied too truly to a great deal of that cynical and ſcornful zeal, that is in the world at this day; men declaim againſt the pride, and pomp, and grandeur of antichriſtian Prelates, with a pride no whit inferior to theirs whom they thus decry. However it is plain, that thoſe things which are imitable by a ſenſual heart, and indeed performable by the mere magic of an exalted fancy, are not to be reſted in by a ſincere Chriſtian. Read over therefore I beſeech you the fruits of the Spirit recorded by the Apoſtle *Paul* and the Apoſtle *Peter*, Gal. v. 22, &c. 2 Pet. i. 5, 6. and eſtimate yourſelves by them: theſe things are utterly incompatible to the mere animal man: all the natural men and devils in the world cannot be humble, meek, ſelf-denying, patient, charitable, lovers of GOD more than of themſelves, or of their enemies as themſelves. Would you judge rightly of the goodneſs of any opinion? then value it by the tendency that is in it to advance the life of GOD: particularly thus judge of the Millenarian opinion, which begins to be ſo much hugged in the world: concerning which I will only ſay thus much at preſent, that, in the common notion of it, as it promiſes a ſtate of much eaſe, liberty, power, proſperity, and freedom from all perſecutions and oppreſſions, it is as grateful to the fleſhly palate, and will be as gladly embraced by the mere animal man, as by the greateſt ſaint upon earth. And therefore, ſuppoſing it to be true, yet I cannot but wonder how it comes

to administer so much satisfaction, and afford such a marvellous relish to minds divinely principled, as many seem to taste in it. By this same tendency, to advance the divine life in your souls, judge also of all your enjoyments, riches, honours, liberties, friends, health, children, &c. and value them, if it be possible, only under this consideration. But to hasten to an end, I will endeavour to set on this general exhortation by two or three weighty considerations. First, It is utterly impossible that any speculation, opinion, profession, enjoyment, ornament, performance, or any other thing, but the transformation of the mind into the very image and nature of GOD, should ever be able to perfect our souls, or commend us unto GOD. They cannot perfect our souls, as being most of them exterior, and all of them inferior to it. They cannot commend a man to GOD, who loves us, and whom we so far know and love, as we partake of his nature, and resemble him: this is the love of GOD, this is the worship of GOD, and this is really the soul's acquaintance with him, and nothing but this. Secondly, The advancement of the divine life is that which GOD mainly designs in the world. I need instance but in two things: 1. The sending of his own SON into the world for this very end and purpose, *that he might take away our sins*, says the Apostle *John*, 1 John iii. 5, 8. and again, *that he might destroy the works of the devil*; and again, says the Apostle *Paul*, *That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of*

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good works, Tit. ii. 14. 2. It appears that this is the grand design of GOD in the world, inasmuch as he doth not deliver his faithful servants out of their afflictions and tribulations: which he would not fail to do, did he not intend them a greater good thereby, and design to lead them on and raise them up to a higher life. Now, what can more ennoble these souls of ours, than to live upon the same design with GOD himself?

AND now, reader, I commend thee to the blessing of GOD, in the perusal of this small tract, which I have composed, and now exposed, under a sense of that common obligation that lies upon every person to be active in his sphere for the interest of the name and honour of GOD, and to render his life as useful as he may: more particularly, under a sense of my own deficiency in several accomplishments, whereby others are better fitted to serve their generation: and especially, under a sense of the peculiar engagement that lieth upon me, to dedicate my life entirely to his service, from whom I have so lately, and that so signally, received the same afresh: in imitation of whom, I hope thou wilt be indulgent towards my infirmities: to whom I heartily commend thee, and to the precious influences of his eternal Spirit, and rest,

Thy servant

in his work,

and for his sake,

SAMUEL SHAW.

IMMANUEL:

Or, A DISCOVERY of

TRUE RELIGION,

As it imports

A living Principle in the Minds of Men.

CHAP. I.

The occasion of the words of the text. The principal contents of it. The original of true religion. All souls the offspring of GOD, *and a more especial portraicture of him; but godly souls yet more especially.* GOD *the author of religion from without, in several respects;* GOD *the author of it from within, enlightening the faculty. Religion something of* GOD *in the soul. A discovery of religious men by the affinity that they have to* GOD. GOD *alone to be acknowledged in all holy accomplishment. The original of sin from hence discovered.*

JOHN IV. 14.

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.

THIS chapter contains an excellent, profitable familiar discourse of the blessed SAVIOUR of the world, into whose lips grace was poured, *Psal.* xlv. 2.

xlv. 2. and he ceaſed not to pour it out again. That which is ſaid of the wiſe, *Prov.* xv. 7. is fully verified of wiſdom itſelf, his lips diſperſed knowledge. A poor woman of *Samaria* comes to draw water, and our SAVIOUR takes occaſion from the water to inſtruct her in the great and excellent doctrines of the kingdom of heaven. O the admirable zeal for GOD, and compaſſion for ſouls, which dwelt in that divine breaſt! and O the wonderful unſearchable counſels of an all-wiſe GOD! He ordains *Saul*'s ſeeking of aſſes to be the means of his finding a kingdom upon earth; and this poor woman's ſeeking of water, to be an occaſion of her finding the way to the kingdom of heaven. She comes to the well of *Jacob*, and, behold, ſhe meets with the GOD of *Jacob* there. The occaſion, paſſages, and iſſue of this diſcourſe, would each afford many good and profitable obſervations: but I think none more than this verſe that I have pitched upon; in which the myſtery of goſpel-grace is rarely unfolded, and true Chriſtian religion is excellently deſcribed. For ſo I underſtand our SAVIOUR, not as ſpeaking of faith, or knowledge, or any other particular grace, but of grace in general, of the holy SPIRIT of GOD; that is, the gifts and graces of it, of true godlineſs; or, if you will, of Chriſtian religion; for that word I ſhall chooſe to retain throughout my diſcourſe, as being moſt intelligible and comprehenſive.

IN which words we find the true Chriſtian religion unfolded in the original, nature, properties, conſequent,

conſequent, and end of it. The original of it is found in thoſe words, *I ſhall give him*; the nature of it is deſcribed by *a well of water*; the properties of it will be found in the phraſe of *ſpringing up*; the conſequent of it, that the man that is endowed with it *ſhall never thirſt*; the end or perfection of it is *everlaſting life*. Of all theſe, by God's aſſiſtance, in this order.

First, I begin at the original of it, as it ſeems meet I ſhould; for indeed it is firſt found in the words, *The water that I ſhall give him*. And here the propoſition that I ſhall go upon muſt be, "That "the true Chriſtian religion is of divine original." All ſouls are indeed the offſpring of God. Thoſe noble faculties of underſtanding, and a will free from conſtraint, do more reſemble the nature of God than all the world beſides. There is more of the glory, beauty, and brightneſs of God in a ſoul, than there is in the ſun itſelf. The Apoſtle allows it as a proper ſpeech ſpoken in common of all men, *for we are alſo his offſpring*, Acts xvii. 28. God hath derived more lively prints of himſelf, and his divine eſſence, upon a rational ſoul, than he hath upon the whole creation: ſo that the ſoul of man, even as to its conſtitution, doth declare and diſcover more of the nature of God, than all the other things that he hath made, whereof the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* i. 20. He that rightly converſeth with his own ſoul, will get more acquaintance with God, than they that gaze continually upon the material heavens, or traverſe the dark

and

and utmoſt corners of the earth, or *go down unto the ſea in ſhips*; the ſerious conſideration of the little world will teach more of him than the great one could do: ſo that I doubt not to take the Apoſtle's words concerning the word of GOD, and apply them to the nature of GOD, Rom. x. 6. *Say not in thy heart, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven*, to bring a diſcovery of GOD from thence? or, *who ſhall deſcend into the deep*, to fetch it up from thence? The nature and eſſence of GOD is nigh thee, even in thine own ſoul, excellently diſplayed in the conſtitution and frame, powers, and faculties thereof: GOD hath not made any creature ſo capable of receiving and reflecting his image and glory, as angels and men: which hath made me often to ſay, "That the vileſt ſoul of man is much more beau-"tiful and honourable than the moſt excellent "body, than the very body of the ſun at noon-"day." And, by the way, this may render ſin odious and lothſome; becauſe it hath defiled the faireſt piece of GOD's workmanſhip in the world, and hath blurred the cleareſt copy which he had drawn of himſelf in the whole creation.

BUT though all rational ſouls be the children of GOD, yet all of them do not imitate their father; though their conſtitution do expreſs much of the eſſence of GOD, yet their diſpoſition doth expreſs the image of the devil. But godly ſouls, who are *followers of God*, are indeed his *dear children*, Eph. v. 1. Holy ſouls, who are endowed with a divine and GOD-like diſpoſition, and do work the works

of

of GOD, these are most truly and properly his offspring, *Matt.* v. 44, 45. And in this respect GOD's children are his *workmanship created unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10. Religion is of a divine original: GOD is the author and father of it, both from without and from within.

1. GOD is the author of it from without. When man had fallen from GOD by sin, and so had lost his way, and was become both unwilling and unable to return, GOD was pleased to set up that glorious light, his own SON, *the Sun of righteousness*, in the world, that he might guide our feet into the way of peace, who is therefore called, *A light to lighten the Gentiles*, Luke ii. 32. and compared to a candle set upon a candlestic, *Mark* iv. 21. GOD of his infinite free grace, and over-flowing goodness, provided a Mediator, in and by whom these apostate souls might be reconciled, and re-united to himself; and *to as many as receive him, to them he giveth power to become the sons of God*, John i. 12.

YET further, it pleased GOD in his infinite wisdom and mercy, to chalk out the way of life and peace in the holy scriptures, and therein to unlock the secrets of salvation to succeeding generations. Herein he hath plainly laid down the terms of the covenant of peace which was made in the Mediator, and given precepts and promises for the direction and encouragement of as many as will inquire into the same. These are the sacred oracles which give clear and certain answers to all that do consult them about their future state, *Romans* iii. 2.

CHRIST

CHRIST JESUS opened the way into the holiest of all, and the ſcriptures they come after and point it out unto us: he purchaſed life and immortality, and theſe bring it to light, 2 *Tim.* i. 10.

AND yet further, that theſe might not be miſtaken or perverted to mens deſtruction, which were ordained for their ſalvation, which ſometimes doth come to paſs, 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. GOD hath been pleaſed to commit theſe records into the hands of his church, and therein to his miniſters, whom he hath appointed, called, qualified, inſtructed, for the opening, explaining, interpreting, and applying of them: ſo that they are called *ſcribes inſtructed unto the kingdom of God, and ſtewards of the myſteries, ſtewards over the houſhold of God, to give unto every one his portion.* Theſe Apoſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts, Paſtors, Teachers, GOD hath given *for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt*, Eph. iv. 11, 12.

THESE things hath GOD done for us, from without us; he hath ſet up a light, chalked out our way, and appointed us guides. To which I might add the many incitements and motives which we call mercies or comforts of this life; and the many affrightments of judgments and afflictions which GOD hath added to the promiſes and threatnings of his word, to bring us into the way of life. But all theſe are too little, too weak of themſelves to bring back a ſtraggling ſoul, or to produce a living principle of true religion in it. Therefore,

2. GOD

2. GOD is the author of religion from within. He doth not only reveal himself and his SON to the soul, but in it; he doth not only make discoveries to it, but lively impressions upon it; he doth not only appoint, and point out the way of life, but breathes in the breath of life. He hath not only provided a SAVIOUR, a REDEEMER, but he also draws the soul unto him, *John* vi. 44. He hath not only appointed pastors and teachers, but he himself impregnates their word, and clothes their doctrine with his own power, using their ministry as an instrument whereby to teach; so that the children of GOD are said to be *all taught of God*, John vi. 45. Ministers can only discover, and, as it were, enlighten the object; but GOD enlightens the faculty, he gives the seeing eye, and does actually enable it to discern. Therefore the work of converting a soul is still ascribed to GOD in scripture; he begets us again, 1 *Pet.* i. 3. he draws the soul, before it can run after him, *Cant.* i. 4. CHRIST apprehends the soul, lays powerful hold of it, *Phil.* iii. 12. GOD gives a heart of flesh, a new heart; he causes men to walk in his statutes, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26, 27. He puts his law into their inward parts, and writes it in their hearts, *Jer.* xxxi. 33. To which I might add many more quotations of the same value.

BUT yet, methinks, we are not come to a perfect discovery of religion's being the offspring of GOD in the minds of men. For it is GOD who enlightneth the faculty as to the learning of all other

other things also; he teacheth the grammar and the rhetoric, as well as the divinity; he instructeth even the husbandman to discretion in his affairs of husbandry, and teaches him to plow, and sow, and thresh, &c. Isa. xxviii. 26. Not only the gift of divine knowledge, but indeed *every good gift cometh from the father of lights*, James i. 17. God doth from within give that capacity, illumination of the faculty, ingenuity, whereby we comprehend the mysteries of nature, as well as of grace, *John* i. 9.

THEREFORE we may conceive of the original of religion in a more inward and spiritual manner still. It is not so much given of GOD, as itself is something of GOD in the soul; as the soul is not so properly said to give life, as to be the life of man. As the conjunction of the soul with the body is the life of the body, so verily the life of the soul stands in its conjuction with GOD by a spiritual union of will and affections. GOD doth not enlighten mens minds as the sun enlightens the world, by shining unto them, and round about them, but by shining into them, by enlightning the faculty, as I said before, yea, which seems to be somewhat more, by shining in their hearts, as the Apostle phraseth it, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6. He sets up a candle, which is his own light within the soul; so that the soul sees GOD in his own light, and loves him with the love that he hath shed abroad in it; and religion is no other than a reflection of that divine image, life, and light, and love, which from

GOD

GOD are ſtamped and imprinted upon the ſouls of true Chriſtians. GOD is ſaid to enlighten the ſoul, but it is not as the ſun enlightens, that you ſee; ſo he draws the ſoul too, but not *ab extra* only, as one man draweth another with a cord, as *Jupiter* in *Homer* draws men up to heaven by a chain, and *Mahomet* his diſciples by a lock of hair; but he draws the ſoul, as the ſun draws up earthly vapours by infuſing its virtue and power into them; or, as the loadſtone draws the iron, by the powerful inſinuations of his grace. GOD doth not ſo much communicate himſelf to the ſoul by way of diſcovery, as by way of impreſſion, as I ſaid before; and indeed not ſo much by impreſſion neither, as by a myſtical and wonderful way of implantation. Religion is not ſo much ſomething from GOD, as ſomething of GOD in the minds of good men, for ſo the ſcripture allows us to ſpeak: it is therefore called his image, *Col.* iii. 10. and good men are ſaid to *live according to God in the ſpirit*, 1 Peter iv. 6. but, as if that were not high enough, it is not only called his image, but even a participation of his divine nature, 2 *Pet.* i. 4. ſomething of CHRIST in the ſoul, an Infant-CHRIST as one calls it, alluding to the Apoſtle, *Gal.* iv. 19. where the ſaving knowledge of CHRIST is called CHRIST himſelf,—*until Chriſt be formed in you.* True religion is, as it were, GOD dwelling in the ſoul, and CHRIST dwelling in the ſoul, as the Apoſtles St *John* and St *Paul* do expreſs it: yea, GOD himſelf is pleaſed thus to expreſs his relation to the godly

ſoul, *Iſa.* lvii. 15. *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a humble ſpirit*; and again, 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. *As God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.* Pure religion is a beam of the Father of lights, *lumen de lumine*; it is a drop of that eternal fountain of goodneſs and holineſs, the breath of the power of GOD, a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightneſs of the everlaſting light, the unſpotted mirror of the power of GOD, and the image of his goodneſs, more beautiful than the ſun, and above all the orders of ſtars; being compared with the light, ſhe is found before it, as the author of the book of *Wiſdom* ſpeaks, chap. vii. What is ſpoken of the eternal SON of GOD, *Heb.* i. 3. may, in a ſenſe, be truly affirmed of religion in the abſtract, that βλάστημα τῦ ὐρανῦ, "offſpring or branch of hea-"ven," that it is ἀπάυγασμα τῆς δόξης, "the efful-"gency or beaming forth of divine glory;" for there is more of the divine glory and beauty ſhining forth in one godly ſoul, than in all things in the world beſide: the glorious light of the ſun is but a dark ſhadow of the divine light, not to be compared with the beauty of holineſs. An immortal ſoul doth more reſemble the divine nature than any other created being; but religion in the ſoul is a thouſand times more divine than the ſoul itſelf. The material world is indeed a darker repreſentation of divine wiſdom, power, and goodneſs; it is as it were the footſteps of GOD: the immaterial world of angels and ſpirits does repreſent him more clearly,

clearly, and are the face of GOD: but holineſs in the ſoul doth moſt nearly reſemble him of all created things; one may call it the beauty and glory of his face. Every creature partakes of GOD indeed; he had no copy but himſelf and his own eſſence to frame the world by; ſo that all theſe muſt needs carry ſome reſemblance of their maker. But no creature is capable of ſuch communications of GOD as a rational immortal ſpirit is; and the higheſt that angel or ſpirit, or any created nature can be made capable of, is to be *holy as God is holy*. So then if the poet may call the ſoul, and St *Paul* allows him in it, *Divinæ particula auræ*; ſure one may rather ſpeak at that rate of religion, which is the higheſt perfection that the ſoul can attain to, either in the world that now is, or that which is to come. One ſoul, any one ſoul of man, is worth all the world beſide for glory and dignity; but the loweſt degree of true holineſs, pure religion, conformity to the divine nature and will, is more worth than a world of ſouls, and to be preferred before the eſſence of angels. I have often admired three great myſteries and mercies, GOD revealed in the fleſh, GOD revealed in the word, and GOD revealed in the ſoul: this laſt is the myſtery of godlineſs which I am ſpeaking of, but cannot fathom: it is this that the Apoſtle ſays tranſcends the ſight of our eyes, the capacity of our ears, and all the faculties of our ſouls too, 1 *Cor.* ii. 9. *Eye hath not ſeen, &c.* CHRIST JESUS formed in the ſoul of man, incarnate in a heart of fleſh, is as great a miracle, and a greater

mercy, than CHRIST formed in the womb of a virgin, and incarnate in a human body. There was once much glorying concerning CHRIST in the world, the hope of *Iſrael*; but let us call out to the powers of eternity, and the ages of the world to come, to help us to celebrate and magnify CHRIST in us *the hope of glory*; or, if you will, CHRIST in us the firſt-fruits of glory. What has been ſaid may,

Firſt, Help us in our diſcoveries of that precious pearl, Religion. There is nothing in the world that men do generally more ſeek, or leſs find: no nation in the world but hath courted it in one way or other; but alas how few that have obtained it! At this day there are many claims laid to it, all pretending a juſt title: the men of *Judah* cry, She is of kin to us; the men of *Iſrael* ſay, We have ten parts in this queen, and we have more right in religion than ye; according as they contended of old about King *David*, 2 Sam. xix. They ſay of CHRIST, as it was foretold, though perhaps not in the ſame ſenſe as was foretold, Lo, here he is; and lo, there he is; which hath made many ſay, he is not at all: or, if I may go on in the ſame alluſion, they live by the rule that there follows, they will not go forth to ſeek him any where. Mighty ſtrivings, yea, and wars there have been about the *Prince of peace*, whoſe he ſhould be: and at this day no queſtion more debated, nor leſs decided, than which is the religious party in the land. O would to GOD men would diſpute this controverſy with

with works and not with words, much leſs with blows! Religion is of an eminent pedigree, of a noble deſcent; you may find her name in the regiſter of heaven, and look where GOD is, there is ſhe. She carries her name in her forchead; the divine diſpoſition that ſhe is of, the divine works which ſhe worketh, which no one elſe can work, the ſame do bear witneſs which is ſhe. I am ready to ſay with the man that had been blind, *John* ix. 3. herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not Religion who ſhe is, and yet ſhe is the mighty power of GOD opening the eyes, changing the hearts, and as it were deifying the ſouls of men. Why do we not alſo go about enquiring which of thoſe many ſtars is the moon in the firmament? If ye aſk of the religious party, I will point you to the bleſſed and eternal GOD, and ſay, As he is, ſo are they, in their capacity, each one reſembling the children of a king; or I will point out the religious Chriſtian by the ſame token as CHRIST himſelf was marked out to *John* the Baptiſt, 1 *John* i. 33. *Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining, the ſame is he.* If ye enquire about the children of GOD, the Apoſtle ſhall deſcribe them for you, *Eph.* v. 1. the followers of GOD are his dear children. That which is moſt nearly allied to the nature and life of GOD, that call Religion, under whatſoever diſguiſes or reproaches it may go in the world. Examine the world by no lower a mark, than that character that is given of *David*, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. and the man that doth ap-

pear to be after GOD's heart, namely, conformable to his image, compliant with his will, and ſtudious of his glory, pitch upon him, for that is that man, under what name ſoever he goes, of what party or faction ſoever he is. And let no ſoul examine itſelf by any lower marks than this, ἰσι τις Θεὸς ἔνδον, "participation of the divine nature, conformity to "the divine image." Examine what alliance your ſoul hath to GOD, *whoſe is the image and ſuperſcription.* Religion is a divine accompliſhment, an efflux from GOD, and may, by its affinity to heaven, be diſcerned from a brat of hell and darkneſs. Therefore, Chriſtians, if you will make a judgment of your ſtate, lay your hearts and lives to the rule, the eternal goodneſs, the uncreated purity and holineſs, and ſee whether you reſemble that copy: for conformity to the image and will of GOD, that is Religion; and that GOD will own for his, when all the counterfeits and ſhadows of it will fly away, and diſappear for ever. I fear it may be imputed as a great piece of vanity and idle curioſity to many counterfeit ſpeculative Chriſtians, that they are very inquiſitive, prying into the hidden rolls of GOD's decree, the ſecrets of predeſtination, to find out the cauſes and method of their vocation and ſalvation; in the mean time they are not ſolicitous for, nor ſtudious of the relation and reſemblance that every religious ſoul bears unto GOD himſelf, the heaven that is opened within the godly ſoul itſelf, and the whole plot and myſtery of ſalvation tranſacted upon the heart of a true Chriſtian. There is a vanity

which

which I have obſerved in many pretenders to nobility and learning, when men ſeek to demonſtrate the one by their coat of arms, and the records of their family, and the other by a gown, or a title, or their names ſtanding in the regiſter of the univerſity, rather than by the accompliſhments and behaviours of gentlemen or ſcholars. A like vanity, I doubt, may be obſerved in many pretenders to religion: ſome are ſearching GOD's decretals, to find their names written in the book of life; when they ſhould be ſtudying to find GOD's name written upon their hearts, *holineſs to the Lord* engraven upon their ſouls: ſome are buſy in examining themſelves by notes and marks without them; when they ſhould labour to find the marks and prints of GOD and his nature upon them: ſome have their religion in their books and authors, which ſhould be the law of GOD written in the tables of the heart: ſome glory in the bulk of their duties, and in the multitude of their pompous performances, and religious atchievements, crying, with *Jehu*, *Come, ſee here my zeal for the Lord*; whereas it were much more excellent, if one could ſee their likeneſs to the LORD, and the characters of divine beauty and holineſs drawn upon their hearts and lives. But we, if we would judge rightly of our religious ſtate, muſt view ourſelves in GOD, who is the fountain of all goodneſs and holineſs, and the rule of all perfection. Value yourſelves by your ſouls, and not by your bodies, eſtates, friends, or any outward accompliſhments, as moſt

men do: but that is not enough; if men reſt there, they make an idol of the faireſt of GOD's creatures, even their own ſouls; therefore value your ſouls themſelves by what they have of GOD in them. To ſtudy the bleſſed and glorious GOD in his word, and to converſe with him in his works, is indeed an excellent and honourable employment; but O what a bleſſed ſtudy is it to view him in the communications of himſelf, and the impreſſions of his grace upon our own ſouls! All the thin and ſubtil ſpeculations which the moſt raiſed philoſophers have of the eſſence and nature of GOD are a poor, and low, and beggarly employment and attainment, in compariſon of thoſe bleſſed viſions of GOD which a godly ſoul hath in itſelf, when it finds itſelf partaker of a divine nature, and living a divine life. O labour to view GOD and his divine perfections in your own ſouls, in thoſe copies and tranſcripts of them which his holy SPIRIT draws upon the hearts of all godly men. This is the moſt excellent diſcovery of GOD that any ſoul is capable of; it is better and more deſirable than that famous diſcovery that was made to *Moſes* in the clift of the rock, *Exod.* xxxiii. Nay, I ſhould much rather deſire to ſee the real impreſſion of a GOD-like nature upon my own ſoul, to ſee the crucifying of my own pride and ſelf-will, the mortifying of the mere ſenſual life, and a divine life ſpringing up in my ſoul inſtead of it; I would much rather deſire to ſee my ſoul glorified in the image and beauty of GOD put upon it, which is indeed a pledge,

yea,

yea, and a part of eternal glory, than to have a viſion from the Almighty, or hear a voice witneſſing from heaven, and ſaying, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom my ſoul is well pleaſed.* This that I am ſpeaking of is a true foundation of heaven itſelf in the ſoul, a real beginning of happineſs; for happineſs, heaven itſelf, is nothing elſe but a perfect conformity, a chearful and eternal compliance of all the powers of the ſoul with the will of GOD: ſo that as far as a godly ſoul is thus conformed to GOD, and filled with his fulneſs, ſo far is he glorified upon earth. *Sed heu quantum diſtamus ab illo!*

Secondly, Let wiſdom then be juſtified of her children; let the children of GOD, thoſe that are his genuine offspring, riſe up and call him bleſſed, in imitation of their LORD and SAVIOUR, that eldeſt SON of GOD, that *firſt-born amongſt many brethren*, who rejoiced in ſpirit, and ſaid, *I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt revealed theſe things*, Luke x. 21. or, according to the ſtile of the Apoſtle *Peter*, 1 Pet. i. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again!* There is no greater contradiction in the world, than a man pretending religion, and yet aſcribing it to himſelf; whereas pure religion is purely of a divine original: beſides, religion doth principally conſiſt in the ſubduing of ſelf-will, in conformity to, and compliance with the divine will, in ſerving the intereſt of GOD's glory in the world. Then, and not till then, may a ſoul be truly called religious,

gious, when GOD becomes greateſt of all to it and in it, and the intereſt of GOD is ſo powerfully planted in it, that no other intereſt, no ſelf-intereſt, no creature-love, no particular private end, can grow by it, no more than the magicians could ſtand before *Moſes*, when he came in the power of GOD to work wonders. So that what *Solomon* ſaith of ſelf-ſeeking, *Prov.* xxv. 27. *For men to ſeek their own glory is not glory*; the like I may ſafely ſay upon that double ground that I have laid down, ſelf-religion is not religion. How vainly and madly do men dream of their ſelf-religion carrying them to heaven; when heaven itſelf is nothing elſe but the perfection of ſelf-denial, and GOD's becoming all things to the ſaints, 1 *Cor.* xv. 28. Inſtead of advancing men towards heaven, there is nothing in the world that doth more directly make war againſt heaven, than that γιγαντώδης ψυχὴ (as *Siracides* calls it) that proud and petulant ſpirit of ſelf-will that rules in the children of diſobedience. So that when the HOLY GHOST would deſcribe *David* one of the beſt men, to the beſt advantage, he deſcribes him with oppoſition to ſelf and ſelf-will, 1 *Sam.* xiii. 14. *a man after God's own heart*; and again, *Acts* xiii. 36. *he ſerved the will of God in his generation.*

THERE have been of old a great number of philoſophical men, who being raiſed up above the ſpeculation of their own ſouls, which is the logical life, unto a contemplation of a deity; and being purged, by a lower kind of virtue and moral goodneſs,

neſs, from the pollutions that are in this world through luſt, did yet ultimately ſettle into themſelves, and their own ſelf-love. They were full indeed, but it was not with *the fulneſs of God*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, but with a ſelf-ſufficiency; the leaven of ſelf-love lying at the bottom did make them ſwell with pride and ſelf-conceit. Now theſe men, though they were free from groſs external enormities, yet did not attain to a true knowledge of GOD, nor any true religion, becauſe they did ſet up themſelves to be their own idols, and carry ſuch an image of themſelves continually before their eyes, that they had no clear and ſpiritual diſcerning of GOD. They did, as it is ſtoried of one of the *Perſian* Kings, enſhrine themſelves in a temple of their own. But what ſpeak I of heathen philoſophers? Is there not the ſame unclean ſpirit of ſelf-adoration to be found amongſt many Chriſtians, yea, and teachers of Chriſtianity too? witneſs that whole brood, thoſe men, who, whilſt they hang the grace of GOD upon man's free-will, do utterly rob him of his glory. Some of theſe have impudently given a ſhort, but unſavoury anſwer to the Apoſtle's queſtion, in 1 *Cor.* iv. 7. *Who maketh you to differ from another? Ego meipſum diſcerno*, "I "make myſelf to differ?" Theſe men, while they pretend to high attainments, do diſcover a low and moſt ignoble ſpirit: to faſten and feed upon any thing in the creature, is the part of a low and degenerate ſpirit; on the other hand, it is the greateſt perfection of the creature, not to be its own,

not to be any thing in itſelf, or any way diſtinct from the bleſſed GOD, the father and fountain of light and grace. Holy *Paul* is all along in a different ſtrain, as in 1 *Cor.* xv. 10. *I, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* I told you before what a fair and honourable character the HOLY GHOST hath given of holy *David, a man after God's own heart:* now you may alſo find a deſcription of theſe men too in ſcripture, not much differing from the other in phraſe, but very much in ſenſe; it is the ſame that is given of the proud prince of *Tyrus*, Ezek. xxviii. 2. *They ſet their heart as the heart of God.* But we, if we do indeed partake of the divine nature, ſhall not dare to take any part of the divine glory; if we conform to GOD's image, we ſhall not ſet up our own. This ſelf-glorying, in the predominancy of it, is utterly inconſiſtent with true religion, as fire is with water: for religion is nothing elſe but the ſhinings forth of GOD into the ſoul, the reflection of a beauty and glory which GOD hath put upon it. Give all therefore unto GOD; for whatſoever is kept back, is ſacrilegiouſly purloined from him: glory we in the fulneſs of GOD alone, and in ſelf-penury and nothingneſs. The whole of religion is of GOD. Do we ſee and diſcern the great things of GOD? It is by that light that GOD hath ſet up in us; according to that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* ii. 11. *The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.* That love whereby we love him, he firſt ſhed abroad in our hearts. If our ſouls be beautiful, it is with his bright-

brightneſs, the beauty and glory of eſſential holineſs, according to that of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* xiii. 10. *Partakers of his holineſs.* If we be really and truly full, we receive it of his fulneſs, according to that of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* iii. 19. *filled with all the fulneſs of God.* In a word, if we be in any GOD-like diſpoſitions, like unto him, it is by his ſpreading of his image in us, and over us. By all which, it appears to be a thing not only wicked and unwarrantable, but utterly impoſſible for a godly ſoul to exalt himſelf againſt GOD, for grace to advance itſelf againſt divine glory; for grace is nothing elſe but a communication of divine glory; and GOD is then glorified, when the ſoul in holy and gracious diſpoſitions becomes like unto him. How is it poſſible that grace ſhould be a ſhadow to obſcure divine glory, when itſelf is nothing elſe, as it comes from GOD, but a beam of glory? and as it is found in the creature, may properly be called a reflection of it. To conclude then, be ye perſuaded, that a man hath ſo much of GOD as he hath of humility, and ſelf-denial, and ſelf-nothingneſs, and no more; he is ſo far of GOD, as he loves him, honours him, imitates him, and lives to him, and no farther.

Thirdly, By this diſcovery of the original of religion, we come to underſtand the original of ſin and wickedneſs. And here, according to the method wherein I ſpoke of the original of religion, I might ſhew you how the original of ſin from without is of the devil, who firſt uſhered it into the world,

world, and ceaſeth not to tempt men to it continually; as alſo of men, who are his inſtruments; and that it does, in a ſenſe, ſpring from many occaſions without. But theſe things are more improperly ſaid to be the cauſes of ſin. The inward cauſe is the corrupt heart of man, that unclean ſpirit, that deviliſh nature, which is indeed the worſt and moſt pernicious devil in the world to man. It is an old ſaying, *Homo homini dæmon*; one man is a devil to another; which though it be in ſome ſenſe true, yet it is more proper to ſay, *Homo ſibi dæmon*, man is a devil to himſelf; taking the ſpirit and principle of apoſtaſy, that rebellious nature, for the devil, which indeed doth beſt deſerve that name. But yet, if we enquire more ſtrictly into the original and nature of this monſter, we ſhall beſt know what to ſay of it, and how to deſcribe it, by what we have heard of religion. Sin then, to ſpeak properly, is nothing elſe but a degeneration from a holy ſtate, an apoſtaſy from a holy GOD. Religion is a participation of GOD, and ſin is a ſtraggling off from him. Therefore it is wont to be defined by negatives, a departure from GOD, a forſaking of him, a living in the world without him, *&c.* The ſoul's falling off from GOD, does deſcribe the general nature of ſin; but then as it ſinks into itſelf, or ſettles upon the world, and faſtens upon the creature, or any thing therein; ſo it becomes ſpecified, and is called pride, covetouſneſs, ambition, and by many other names. All ſouls are the offſpring of GOD, were originally formed

formed into his image and likeneſs; and when they expreſs the purity and holineſs of the divine nature, in being perfect as GOD is perfect, then are they called the children of GOD: but thoſe impure ſpirits that do lapſe and ſlide from GOD, may be ſaid μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἄλλο γένος, to implant themſelves into another ſtock by their own low and earthly lives, and are no more owned for the children of GOD, but *are of their father the devil*, John x. 44. By which you may underſtand the low and baſe original of ſin: nothing can be ſo vile as that which, to ſpeak properly, is nothing elſe but a perfect falling off from glory itſelf. By this you may alſo, by the way, take notice of the miſerable condition of unholy ſouls. We need not call for fire and brimſtone to paint out the wretched ſtate of ſinful ſouls. Sin itſelf is hell and death, and miſery to the ſoul, as being a departure from goodneſs and holineſs itſelf; I mean from GOD, in conjunction with whom the happineſs, and bleſſedneſs, and heaven of a ſoul do conſiſt. Avoid it therefore, as you would avoid being miſerable.

CHAP. II.

True religion deſcribed, as to the nature of it, by water; a metaphor uſual in the ſcriptures, 1. *By reaſon of the cleanſing virtue of it. The defiling nature of ſin, and the beauty of holineſs manifeſted.* 2. *By reaſon of the quenching virtue of it. This briefly*

briefly touched upon, and the more full handling of it referred to its proper place. The nature of religion deſcribed by a well of water: that it is a principle in the ſouls of men, proved by much ſcripture. An examination of religion by this teſt; by which examination are excluded all things that are merely external; external reformations and performances inſtanced in. A godly man hath neither the whole of his buſineſs, nor his motives lying without him. In the ſame examination many things internal found not to be religion: it is no ſudden paſſion of the mind; no, not though the ſame amount to an extaſy; nor any thing begotten and maintained by fancy, and the mere power of imagination.

I Come now to ſpeak of the nature of true religion, which is here deſcribed by our bleſſed LORD, by *a well of water*. *Firſt*, By water. *Secondly*, By a well of water. I ſhall ſpeak ſomething of both theſe, but more briefly of the former.

1. PURE religion, or goſpel-grace, is deſcribed by water. This is a compariſon very familiar in the holy Scriptures, both of the Old Teſtament and the New. By this ſimilitude goſpel-grace was typified in the ceremonial law, wherein both perſons and things, ceremonially unclean, were commanded to be waſhed in water, as is abundantly to be ſeen in that adminiſtration. Under this notion the ſame grace is prayed for by the Pſalmiſt, when he had defiled himſelf in the bed of a ſtranger, *Pſalm* li. 7. *Waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow.*

He

He had drunk water out of a ſtrange ciſtern, as his ſon *Solomon* deſcribes that unclean act, *Prov.* v. 15. and now he calls out for water from the fountain of grace, to undefile him: he now cries out for water from the fountain of grace, the bleſſed Meſſiah, that ſprung up into the world at *Bethlehem*, and that with more earneſtneſs than formerly we read that he wiſhed for the water of the well of *Bethlehem*, which is by the gate, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 15. In the ſame phraſe the ſame grace is promiſed by the miniſtry of the Prophets, who propheſied of the grace that ſhould come unto us. Thus we read of the fair and flouriſhing ſtate of the church, *Iſa.* lviii. 11. *Thou ſhalt be like a watered garden, and like a ſpring of water, whoſe waters fail not*; and of the fruitful ſtate of the goſpel proſelytes, *Joel* iii. 18. *All the rivers of Judah ſhall flow with waters, and a fountain ſhall come forth of the houſe of the Lord, and ſhall water the valley of Shittim.* Which promiſes, that they are underſtood of the grace of ſanctification, the prophet *Ezekiel* ſheweth plainly, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25. *I will ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean; from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you:* for ordinary elementary water cannot cleanſe men from idols. The Prophet *Iſaiah* alſo puts it out of doubt, whoſe propheſy, together with the interpretation of it, we find both in one verſe, *Iſa.* xliv. 3. *I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thy offspring.* By the ſame ceremony

remony the gospel dispensation shadows out the same mystery in the sacrament of baptism; and, by the same phrase our SAVIOUR offers and promises the same grace, *John* vii. 37. *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:* and his Apostles after him, who, in allusion to water, call this grace the *washing of regeneration*, Tit. iii. 5. To which I might add 1 *Pet.* iii. 21. and many other texts if it needed.

Now, as the grace of GOD is compared to fire, because of its refining nature, and consuming the dross and refuse of lust in the soul; and to other things for other reasons: so is it compared to water, especially for those two properties, namely, cleansing and quenching: for observe this by the way, that it is a very injurious thing to the HOLY GHOST, to press the metaphors which he useth in scripture, further than they do naturally and freely serve. Neither are we to stick in the letter of the metaphor, but to attend unto the scope of it. If we tenaciously adhere to the phrase, wanton wits will be ready to quarrel with absurdities, and so unawares run into strange blasphemies: they will cry out presently, How can fire wash? when they read that of the Prophet, *Isa.* iv. 4. *The Lord will wash away the filth of the daughter of Zion, by the spirit of burning.* But who art thou, O man! that wilt teach him to speak who formed the tongue? The Spirit of GOD intends the virtue and property of things, when he names them; and that we must mainly attend to.

1. THERE-

1. THEREFORE, by the phraſe *water*, is the cleanſing nature of religion commended to us: it is the undefiling of the ſoul, which ſin and wickedneſs hath polluted: ſin is often deſcribed in ſcripture by filthineſs, lothſomeneſs, abomination, uncleanneſs, a ſpot, a blemiſh, a ſtain, a pollution; which indeed is a moſt proper deſcription of it. The ſpots of leproſy, and the ſcurf of the fouleſt ſcurvy, are beauty-ſpots in compariſon of it: *Job* upon the dunghil, furniſhed cap-a-pee with ſcabs and boils, was not half ſo lothſome as goodly *Abſalom*, in whoſe body *there was no blemiſh from the ſole of his foot to the crown of his head*; but his ſoul was ſtained with the ſanguine ſpots of malice and revenge, and feſtered with the lothſome carbuncle and tumor of ambition. *Lazarus*, lying at the gates full of raw and running ſores, was a far more lovely object in the pure eyes of GOD, than dame *Jezebel*, looking out at the window, adorned with ſpots and paints. If the beſt of a godly man that he hath of his own, even his righteouſneſs, be as a filthy rag, *Iſa.* lxiv. 6. whence ſhall we borrow a phraſe foul enough to deſcribe the worſt of a wicked man, even his wickedneſs? I need ſay no more of it, I can ſay no worſe of it, than to tell you it is ſomething contrary to GOD, who is the eternal Father of light, who is beauty, and brightneſs, and glory itſelf; or, to give it you in the Apoſtle's phraſe, *Rom.* iii. 23. *a falling ſhort of the glory of God*. Which hath made me many times to wonder, and almoſt ready to cry out with the

Prophet,

Prophet, *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this!* when I have ſeen poor, ignorant, wicked, and profane wretches, paſſing by a perſon or a family viſited with ſome lothſome diſeaſe, in a mixture of fear and diſdain, ſtopping their noſes, and haſtening away; when their own ſouls have been more vile than the dung upon the earth, ſpotted with ignorance and atheiſm, ſwollen with the riſings of pride and ſelf-will, and contempt of GOD and his holy image. This might well be matter of wonder to any man, till he conſider with himſelf, that one part of theſe mens uncleanneſs, is that very blindneſs which keeps them from diſcerning it: I ſpeak principally of the defilement of the ſoul; though indeed the ſame do pollute the whole converſation: every action ſpringing from ſuch an unclean heart, thereby becomes filthy; even as *Moſes* his hand, put into his boſom, became leprous, *Exod.* iv. 6. or rather as one that is unclean by a dead body, defileth all that he toucheth, *Hag.* ii. 13.

Now, religion is the cleanſing of this unclean ſpirit and converſation; ſo that, though the ſoul were formerly as filthy and odious as *Augeus* his ſtable, when once thoſe living waters flow into it, and through it, from the pure fountain of grace and holineſs, the Spirit of our GOD, one may ſay of it as the Apoſtle of his *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *Such were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified*, &c. The ſoul that before was white as leproſy, is now white as wool, *Iſa.* i. 18. The ſoul that before was like *Moſes* his hand, leprous as

as ſnow, is now like *David*'s heart, white as ſnow; yea, and whiter too, *Pſal.* li. 7. O what a beauty and glory is upon that godly ſoul, that ſhines with the image and brightneſs of GOD upon it! *Solomon*, in all his glory, was not beautiful like ſuch a ſoul: nay, I dare ſay, the ſplendor of the ſun, in its greateſt ſtrength and altitude, is a miſerable glimmering, if it be compared with the day-ſtar of religion, that even in this life ariſes in the heart; or, if you will, in the Prophet's ſtile, *the ſun of righteouſneſs, which ariſeth with healing in his wings*, upon them that fear the name of GOD. To ſpeak without a metaphor, the godly ſoul, having entertained into itſelf the pure effluxes of divine light and love, breathes after nothing more than to ſee more familiarly, and love more ardently: its inclinations are pure and holy; its motions ſpiritual and powerful; its delights high and heavenly; it may be ſaid to reſt in its love; and yet it may be ſaid, that love will not ſuffer it to reſt, but is ſtill carrying it out into a more intimate union with its beloved object. What is ſaid of the ointment of CHRIST's name, *Cant.* i. 3. is true of the water of his Spirit, it is *poured forth, therefore do the virgins love him.* Religion begets a chaſte and virgin love in the ſoul towards that bleſſed GOD that begot it; it bathes itſelf in the fountain that produced it; and ſuns itſelf perpetually in the warm beams that firſt hatched it. Religion iſſues from GOD himſelf, and is ever iſſuing out towards GOD alone, paſſionately breathing with the holy Pſalmiſt, *Whom have*

I in

I in heaven but thee? In earth there is none that I desire beside thee! The soul that formerly may be said to have lain among the pots, by reason of its filthiness, is now as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold: the soul that formerly may be said to have sitten down by the flesh-pots of *Egypt*, in regard of its sensual and earthly loves, being redeemed by the almighty grace of GOD, is upon its way to the holy land, hastening to a country not earthly but heavenly, *Heb.* xi. 16. This pure principle being put into the soul, puts it upon holy studies, indites holy meditations, directs it to high and noble ends, and makes all its embraces to be pure and chaste, labouring to compass GOD himself, which before were adulterous and idolatrous, free for sin, and self, and the world, to lodge and lie down in. In a word, this offspring of heaven, this King's daughter, the godly soul, is *all glorious within*; yea, and outwardly too, *she is clothed with wrought gold*, Psal. xlv. 13. Her faith within is more precious than gold, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. and her conversation is curiously made up of an embroidery of good works, some of piety, some of charity, some of sobriety, but all of purity, and shineth with more noble and excellent splendor, than the high-priest's garments and breast-plate spangled with such variety of precious stones. This precious ointment, this holy unction, as the Apostle calls it, 1 *John* ii. 20. is as diffusive of itself, and ten thousand times more fragrant, than that of *Aaron*, so much commended in *Psal.* cxxxiii.

that ran down from his head upon his beard, and from thence upon the ſkirts of his garment. *Not my feet only, but my hands and my head, Lord,* ſaid *Peter*, John xiii. 9. not well knowing what he ſaid; but the ſoul that is truly ſenſible of the excellent purity which is cauſed by divine waſhings, longs to have the whole man, the whole life alſo, made partaker of it, and cries, LORD, not my head only, not my heart only, but my hands and my feet alſo, make me wholly pure, as GOD is pure. In a word then, true religion is the cleanſing of the ſoul, and all the powers of it; ſo that, whereas murderers ſometimes lodged in it, now righteouſneſs; the den of thieves, thieviſh luſts, and loves, and intereſts, and ends, which formerly ſtole away the ſoul from GOD, its right owner, is now become a temple fit for the great King to dwell, and live, and reign in: and the whole converſation is turned from its wonted vanity, worldlineſs, and iniquity, and is continually employed about things that are *true, honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely, and of good report*, Phil. iv. 8.

2. BY the phraſe *water*, the quenching nature of religion is commended to us. GOD hath endued the immortal ſoul with a reſtleſs appetite, and raging thirſt after ſome chief good, which the heart of every man is continually groping after, and catching at, though indeed few find it, becauſe they ſeek it where it is not to be found. If we ſpeak properly, it is not gold or ſilver, or popular applauſe, which the covetous or ambitious mind doth

doth ultimately aim at, but ſome chief good, happineſs, ſufficiency, and ſatisfaction in theſe things; wherein they are more guilty of blaſphemy than atheiſm: for it is clear that they do not deny a ſupreme good; for that which men do chiefly and ultimately aim at, is their god, be it what it will; but they do verily blaſpheme the true GOD, when they place their happineſs there where it is not to be found, and attribute that fulneſs and ſufficiency to ſomething elſe beſides the living GOD. Sin hath not deſtroyed the nature and capacity of the rational ſoul, but hath diverted the mind from its adequate object, and hath ſunk it into the creature, where it wanders hither and thither, like a baniſhed man, from one den and cave to another, but is ſecure no where. A wicked man, who is looſed from his centre by ſin, and departed from the fountain of his life, flies low in his affections, and flutters perpetually about the earth, and earthly objects, but can find no more reſt for the foot of his ſoul, than *Noah*'s dove could find for the ſole of her foot. Now, religion is the hand that pulls this wandering bird into her own ark from whence ſhe was departed; it ſettles the ſoul upon its proper centre, and quenches its burning thirſt after happineſs. And for this reaſon it is called water in ſcripture, as appears from *Iſa.* lviii. 11. *The Lord ſhall ſatisfy thy ſoul in drought*; and *Iſa.* xliv. 3. *I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground*; compared with *John* vii. 37. *Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, If any man thirſt, let him come unto me, and drink.*

drink. Religion is a taſte of infinite goodneſs, which quenches the ſoul's thirſt after all other created and finite good; even as that taſte which honeſt *Nathanael* had of CHRIST's divinity, took him off from the expectation of any Meſſiah to come, and made him cry out preſently, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Iſrael*, John i. 49. And every religious ſoul hath ſuch a taſte of GOD, even in this life, which, though it do not perfectly fill him, yet doth perfectly aſſure him where all fulneſs dwells. But of this I ſhall have occaſion to diſcourſe more largely, when I come to treat of the conſequent of true religion.

I PROCEED, therefore, to the ſecond phraſe, whereby our SAVIOUR deſcribes the nature of true religion; it is a well, a fountain in the ſoul; *Shall be in him a well of water.* From which phraſe, to wave niceties, I ſhall only obſerve, "That Reli-"gion is a principle in the ſouls of men."

THE water that CHRIST pours into the ſoul is not like the water that he pours upon our ſtreets, that waſhes them, and runs away; but it becomes a cleanſing principle within the ſoul itſelf; every drop from GOD becomes a fountain in man; not as if man had a kind of αὐτοζωὴ in himſelf, or were the firſt ſpring of his own motions towards GOD: I find not any will in the natural man ſo divinely free. GOD hath indeed given this to his natural Son, his only begotten Son, to have *life in himſelf*, John v. 26. but not to any of his adopted ones. If you aſk me concerning man in his natural capa-

city, I am so far from thinking that he hath a self-quickening power, a principle of life in himself, that I must needs assert the contrary with the Apostle, that he is *dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. ii. 1. so far from thinking that he hath in himself a well of water, that I must call him, with the Prophet, *Isa.* xliv. 3. *thirsty and dry ground.* As for the regenerate man, I will not enter into that deep controversy concerning the co-operation of man's will with the Spirit of GOD, and its subordination to that in all gracious acts, or what a kind of cause of them this renewed will of man may be safely called; only I will affirm, that repenting and believing are properly man's acts, and yet they are performed by GOD's power; first, CHRIST must give this water ere it can be a well of water in the soul; which is enough, I suppose, to clear me from siding with either of those parties, whether those that ascribe to GOD that which he cannot do, or those that ascribe to free-will that which GOD alone can do. But I fear nothing from these controversies; for that way wherein I shall discourse of this matter, will nothing at all border upon them. This, then, I affirm, that religion is a living principle in the souls of good men. I cannot better describe the nature of religion, than to say it is a nature; for so does the Apostle speak, or at least allows us to speak, when he calls it a participation of a divine nature, 2 *Pet.* i. 4. Nothing but a nature can partake of a nature; a man's friend may partake of his goodness and kindness, but his child

only partakes of his nature: he that begets, begets a nature; and so doth he that begets again. The sun enlightens the world outwardly, but it does not give a sun-like nature to the things so enlightened; and the rain doth moisten the earth, and refresh it inwardly, but it does not beget the nature of water in the earth: *But this water that I give*, says our SAVIOUR, *becometh a well of water in the soul.* Religion is not any thing without a man, hanging upon him, or annexed to him; neither is it every something that is in a man, as we shall see anon; but it is a divine principle informing and actuating the souls of good men, a living and lively principle, a free and flowing principle, a strong and lasting principle, an inward and spiritual principle. I must not speak of all these distinctly in this place, for fear of interfering in my discourse. When I say religion is a principle, a vital form acting the soul, and all the powers of it, an inward nature, *&c.* saith not the scripture the same here, a well or fountain of water? And elsewhere, a *new man*, *the hidden man of the heart*, *the inward man*, Eph. iv. 24. 1 Pet. iii. 4. As the soul is called an inward man, respective to the body, 2 *Cor.* iv. 16. so religion is called an inward man, respective to the soul itself, *Rom.* vii. 22. It is a man within man. The man that is truly alive to GOD, hath in him not only inward parts, for so a dead man hath, but an inward man, an inward nature and principle. Again, it is called a root, *Job* xix. 28. or, if not there, yet plainly in *Mark* iv. 17.

where temporary professors are said to have no root in themselves. And this is, by the same propriety of speech whereby a wicked principle is called, *a root of bitterness*, Heb. xii. 15. Again, it is called a seed, *the seed of God*, 1 John iii. 9. where this seed of GOD is called an abiding or remaining principle. In the first creation, GOD made the trees of the earth, having their seed in themselves, *Gen.* i. 11. and in the new creation, these trees of righteousness of GOD's planting, are also made with seed in themselves, though not of themselves: it is said to be the seed of GOD indeed, but remaining in the godly soul. Again, it is called a treasure, in opposition to an alms or annuity, that lasteth but for a day or a year, as a well of water, in opposition to a draught of water; and a treasure of the heart, in opposition to all outward and earthly treasures, *Matt.* xii. 35. It is a treasure affording continual expences, not exhausted, yea, increased by expences; wherein it exceeds all treasures in the world. By the same propriety of speech, sin is called a treasure too, but it is an evil treasure, as our SAVIOUR speaks in that same place. Do you not see what a stock of wickedness sinful men have within themselves, which, although they have spent upon ever since they were born, yet it is not impaired, nay, it is much augmented thereby: and shall not the second *Adam* bestow something as certain and permanent upon his offspring, as the first *Adam* conveyed to his posterity? Though men have something without them, to guide them in the way of

life, yet it is ſome living principle within them, that denominates them living men. The ſcripture will abundantly inform you which is the true circumciſion, *Col.* ii. 11. the true ſacrifice to GOD, *Pſal.* li. 17. And indeed the law itſelf is not ſo much to be conſidered as it was engraven in tables of ſtone, as *being written in the heart*, Jer. xxxi. 33. The *Jews* needed not have taken up their reſt in the law, conſidered as an outward rule or precept; for they knew, or might have known, that GOD requireth *truth in the inward parts*, as one of themſelves, a Prophet and King of their own, acknowledgeth, *Pſal.* li. 6. But I doubt many Chriſtians are alſo ſick of the ſame diſeaſe, whilſt they view the goſpel as an hiſtory, and an external diſpenſation; whereas the Apoſtle, when he oppoſeth it to the law, ſeems altogether to make it an internal thing, a vital form and principle ſeated in the minds and ſpirits of men, 2 *Cor.* iii. 3. The law was an external rule or diſpenſation that could not give life, though it ſhewed the way to it, *Gal.* iii. 21. but the goſpel, in the moſt proper notion of it, ſeems to be an internal impreſſion from GOD, a living principle, whereby the ſoul is enabled to expreſs a real conformity to GOD himſelf. If we conſider the goſpel in the hiſtory of it, and as a piece of book-learning, it is as weak and impotent a thing as the law was; and men may be as remiſs and formal in the profeſſion of this as they were of that, which we ſee by daily ſad experience. But if we conſider the goſpel as an efflux of life and

power from GOD himself upon the soul, producing life whereever it comes, then we have a clear distinction between the law and the gospel; to which the Apostle seems to refer, when he calls the *Corinthians the epistle of Christ, not written with ink, nor in tables of stone, but with the Spirit of the living God, in fleshly tables of the heart*, 2 Cor. iii. 3. According to which notion of the law and gospel, I think we may, with a learned man of our own, come to a good understanding of that tormented text, *Jer.* xxx. 31. quoted by the Apostle, *Heb.* x. 8. *This is the covenant that I will make, I will put my law into their minds, &c.* The gospel doth not so much consist in *verbis* as in virtue; a divine principle of religion in the soul, is the best gospel: and so *Abraham* and *Moses* under the law, were truly gospellers; and, on the other hand, all carnal Christians that converse with the gospel only as a thing without them, are as truly legal, and as far short of the righteousness of GOD, as ever any of the *Jews* were. Thus we see that religion is a principle in the souls of good men, —*shall be in him a well of water.*

WE shall here now take notice of the difference between the true, and all counterfeit religions. Religion is that pearl of great price, which few men are possessed of, though all men pretend to it, *Laodicean*-like, saying, *they are rich and need nothing*, when indeed *they are poor and have nothing*. This, then shall be the test by which, at present, we will a little try the counterfeit pearls. True religion

is

is an inward nature, an inward and abiding principle in the minds of good men, a *well of water.*

1. THEN we muſt exclude all things that are merely external; theſe are not it. Religion is not ſomething annexed to the ſoul, *ab extra*, but a new nature put into it. And here we ſhall glance at two things:

1ſt, A GODLY ſoul does not find the whole of his buſineſs lying without him. Religion does not conſiſt in external reformations, though never ſo many and ſpecious. A falſe and ſlight religion may ſerve to tie mens hands, and reduce their outward actions to a fair ſeemlineſs in the eyes of men: but true religion's main dominion and power is over the ſoul, and its buſineſs lies moſtly in reforming and purging the heart, with all the affections and motions thereof. It is not a battering ram coming from without, and ſerving to beat down the out-works of open and viſible enormities of life, but it enters with a ſecret and ſweet power into the ſoul itſelf, and reduces it from its rebellious temper, and perſuades it willingly to ſurrender itſelf, and all that is in it. Sin may be beaten out of the outward converſation, and yet retire and hide itſelf in the ſecret places of the ſoul, and there bear rule as perfectly by wicked loves and luſts, as ever it did by profane and notorious practices. A man's hands may be tied by ſome external cords caſt upon them, from viſible revenge, and yet murders may lodge in the temple of his heart, as murderers lodged in the temple of old: mens tongues

may be tied up from the foul ſin of giving fair words concerning themſelves; very ſhame may chaſtiſe them out of proud boaſtings, and ſelf-exaltings, when, in the mean time, they ſwell in ſelf-conceit, and are not afraid to bear an unchaſte and ſinful love towards their own perfections, and adore an image of ſelf ſet up in their hearts. What a fair outſide the Phariſee had, himſelf will beſt deſcribe, for indeed it is one of his properties to deſcribe himſelf, *Luke* xviii. 11. *God, I thank thee that I am not, &c.* But if you will have a draught of his inſide, you may beſt take it from our SAVIOUR, *Matt.* xxiii. 23. Neither doth religion conſiſt in external performances, though never ſo many, and ſeemingly ſpiritual. Many profeſſors of Chriſtianity, I doubt, ſink all their religion into a conſtant courſe of duties, and a model of performances, being mere ſtrangers to the life, and ſtrength, and ſweetneſs of true religion. Thoſe things are needful, and uſeful, and helpful, yea, and honourable, becauſe they have a relation and ſome tendency to GOD; but they are apt to become ſnares and idols to ſuperſtitious minds, who conceit that GOD is ſome way gratified by theſe; and ſo they take up their reſt in them. That religion, that only varniſhes and beautifies the outſide, tunes the tongue to prayer and conference, inſtructs and extends the hands to diligence and almſdeeds, that awes the converſation into ſome external righteouſneſs or devotion, is here excluded, as alſo by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1. Much leſs can that paſs for religion, that

that ſpends itſelf about forms, and opinions, and parties, and many diſputable points, which we have ſeen ſo much of in our own generation. The religion that runs upon modes, and turns upon intereſts, as a door turns upon its hinges, is a poor narrow ſcant thing, and may eaſily view itſelf at once, all together from firſt to laſt. Men may be as far from the kingdom of heaven in their more ſpiritual forms, and orthodox opinions, as they were in their more carnal and erroneous, if they take up their reſt in them: neither is it the purſuing of any intereſt that will denominate them religious, but the grand intereſt of their ſouls.

2*dly*, A GODLY ſoul in its more inward and ſpiritual acts, hath not its motive without it: for a man may be ſomewhat more inward in his motions, and yet as outward in his motives as the former. Religious acts, and gracious motions, are not originally and primarily cauſed by ſome weights hung upon the ſoul, either by GOD or men, neither by the worldly bleſſings which GOD gives, nor the heavy afflictions which he ſends. The wings, by which the godly ſoul flies out towards GOD, are not waxed to it, as the poets feign *Icarus*'s to have been; but they grow out of itſelf, as the wings of an eagle that flies ſwiftly towards heaven: on the other ſide, a ſoul may be preſſed down unto humiliation under the heavy weight of GOD's judgments, that has no mind to ſtoop, no ſelf-denying or ſelf-abaſing diſpoſition in it. Thus you may ſee *Jehu* flying upon the wings of ambition and

revenge, borne up by ſucceſſes in his government; and his predeceſſor *Ahab* bowing down mournfully under an heavy ſentence. The laws, and penalties, and encouragements, and obſervations of men, ſometimes put a weight upon the ſoul too, but they beget a more ſluggiſh, uneven, and unkindly motion in it. You may expect, that under this head I ſhould ſpeak ſomething of heaven and hell; and truly ſo I may very pertinently, for I think they belong to this place. If you take heaven properly, for a full and glorious union to GOD, and fruition of him, and hell for an eternal ſeparation and ſtraggling from the divinity; and ſuppoſe that the love of GOD, and the fear of living without him, be well drunk into the ſoul, then verily theſe are pure and religious principles: but if we view them as things merely without us, and reſerved for us, and under thoſe common carnal notions of delectableneſs and dreadfulneſs, they are no higher nor better motives to us, than the carnal *Jews* had in the wilderneſs, when they turned their backs upon *Egypt*, where they had been in bondage, and ſet their faces towards *Canaan*, where they hoped to find milk and honey, peace, plenty, and liberty. A ſoul is not carried to heaven, as a body is carried to the grave, upon mens ſhoulders; it is not borne up by props, whether human or divine; nor carried to GOD in a chariot, as a man is carried to ſee his friend: the holy fire of ardent love, wherein the ſoul of *Elijah* had been long carried up towards GOD, was ſomething more excellent, and indeed more

more desirable, than the fiery chariot by which his body and soul were translated together. Religion is a spring of motion which GOD hath put into the soul itself.

AND as all things that are external, whether actions or motives, are excluded in this examination, which we make of religion; so neither,

2. MUST we allow of every thing that is internal to be religion. And therefore,

1st, IT is not a fit, a start, a sudden passion of the mind, caused by the power and strength of some present conviction in the soul, which, in a hot mood, will needs make out after GOD in all haste. This may fitly be compared to the rash and rude motion of the host of *Israel*, who, being chidden for their slothfulness over night, rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, *Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised, for we have sinned*, Numb. xiv. 40. And indeed it fares with these men oftentimes as it did with those, both as to the undertaking, and as to the success; their motion is as sinful as their station; and their success is answerable, they are driven back and discomfited in their enterprize. Nay, though this passion might arise so high, as to be called an extasy or a rapture, yet it deserves not the name of religion: "For religion is, as one speaks elegant-"ly, like the natural heat that is radicated in th "hearts of living creatures, which hath the domi-"nion of the whole body, and sends forth warm

" blood and ſpirits, and vital nouriſhment into " every part and member; it regulates and orders " the motions of it in a due and even manner." But theſe extatical ſouls, though they may blaze like a comet, and ſwell like a torrent or land-flood for a time, and ſhoot forth freſh and high for a little ſeaſon, are ſoon extinguiſhed, emptied, and dried up, becauſe they have not a principle, a ſtock to ſpend upon, or, as our SAVIOUR ſpeaks, *no root in themſelves*. Theſe mens motions and actions bear no more proportion to religion, than a land-flood that ſwells high, and runs ſwiftly, but it is only during the rain; or, in the ſcripture phraſe, than a morning dew that ſoon paſſes away, *Hoſea* vi. 4. is like a well or fountain of water.

2dly, IF religion be a principle, a new nature in the ſoul, then it is not a mere mechaniſm, a piece of art. Art imitates nature; nothing more ordinary, I doubt, than for religion itſelf, that new nature, to go into an art. I need not tell you how all the external acts and ſhootings forth of religion, may be diſſembled and imitated by art, and be acted over by a mimical apiſh Phariſee, who finds nothing at all of the gentle and mighty heat, nor the divine and noble life of it in his own ſoul, whereby he may fairly deceive the credulous world, as I have partly hinted already. But it is poſſible, I wiſh it be not common, for men that are ſomewhat more convinced, enlightned, and affected, to imitate the very power and ſpirit of religion, and to deceive themſelves too, as if they poſſeſſed ſome

true

true living principle; and herein they exceed the most exquisite painters. Now, this may be done by the power of a quick and raised fancy; men hearing such glorious things spoken of heaven, the city of the great King, the new *Jerusalem*, may be carried out by the power of self-love to wish themselves there, being mightily taken with a conceit of the place. But how shall they come at it? Why, they have seen in books, and heard in discourses, of certain signs of grace, and evidences of salvation; and now they set their fancies on work, to find or make some such things in themselves. Fancy is well acquainted with the several affections of love, fear, joy, grief, which are in the soul, and having a great command over the animal spirits, it can send them forth to raise up these affections, even almost when it listeth; and when it hath raised them, it is but putting to some thoughts of God and heaven, and then these look like a handsome platform of true religion drawn in the soul, which they presently view, and fall in love with, and think they do even taste of the powers of the world to come, when indeed it is nothing but a self-fulness and sufficiency that they feed upon. Now, you may know this artificial religion by this; these men can vary it, alter it, enlarge it, straiten it, and new-mold it at pleasure, according to what they see in others, or, according to what themselves like best; one while acting over the joy and confidence of some Christians, anon the humiliation and broken-heartedness of others. But this

fanciful

fanciful religion, proceeding indeed from nothing but low and carnal conceits of GOD and heaven, is of a flitting and vanishing nature. But true Christians are gently, yet powerfully moved by the natural force of true goodness, and the beauty of GOD, and move on steadily and constantly in their way to him, and pursuit of him. The spirit of regeneration in good men spreads itself upon the understanding, and sweetly diffuses itself through the will and affections, which makes true religion to be a consistent and thriving principle in the soul, as not being acted upon the stage of imagination, but upon the highest powers of the soul itself, and it may be discerned by the evenness of its motions, and the immortality of its nature; for a good man, though indeed he cannot go on always with like speed and cheerfulness in his way, yet is not willing at any time to be quite out of it.

But this same nature of true religion you may examine all those spurious and counterfeit religions, that spring from a natural belief of a deity, from convictions, observations, fleshly and low apprehensions of heaven, book-learning, and the precepts of men, as the Prophet calls them, and the rest, which are seated in the fancy, and swim in the brain; whose effect is but to gild the outward man, or, at best, but to move the soul by an external force, in an unnatural, inconstant, and transient manner. In a word, all these pretenders to religion may seem to have water, but they have no well; as there are others, deep men, principled indeed

deed with learning, policy, ingenuity, &c. but not with true goodneſs, whom the Apoſtle calls *wells*, but *without water*, 2 Pet. ii. 17. But the truly godly, and GOD-like, ſoul hath in itſelf a principle of pure religion. *The water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be a well of water, ſpringing up into eternal life.*

CHAP. III.

Containing the firſt property mentioned of true Religion, namely, The freeneſs and unconſtrainedneſs of it: this diſcovered in ſeveral outward acts of morality and worſhip; as alſo in the more inward acts of the ſoul. This freedom conſidered as to its author; in which is conſidered how far the command of GOD *may be ſaid to act a godly ſoul. Secondly, Conſidered as its object. Two cautionary conceſſions; 1ſt, That ſome things without the ſoul may be ſaid to be motives; how far afflictions and temporal proſperity may be ſaid to be ſo. 2dly, That there is a conſtraint lying upon the godly ſoul; which yet takes not away its freedom. An inquiry into forced devotion, and firſt into the cauſes of it, namely, Men themſelves, and that upon a threefold account, other men, or the providences of* GOD. *Secondly, Into the properties of it, proving that it is for the moſt part dry and ſpiritleſs, needy and penurious, uneven, and not permanent.*

I Proceed now, from the nature of Religion, to ſpeak of the properties of it, as many of them as are couched under this phraſe ἅλλομένυ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον,

ſpringing

ſpringing up into everlaſting life. Not to ſqueeze the phraſe any farther than it will naturally afford diſcourſe, I ſhall only take notice of theſe three properties of true religion, contained in the word, *ſpringing up*, namely, the freeneſs, activity, and permanency, or perſeverance of it.

THE firſt property of it, couched under this phraſe, is, that it is free and unconſtrained. Religion is a principle, and it flows and acts freely in the ſoul, after the manner of a fountain; and, in the day of its mighty power, makes the people a willing people, *Pſal.* cx. 3. and the ſoul, in whom it is truly ſeated, to become a free-will offering unto GOD. *Alexander* the Great ſubdued the world with force of arms, and made men rather his tributaries and ſervants, than his lovers and friends; but the great GOD, the King of ſouls, obtains an amicable conqueſt over the hearts of his elect, and overpowers them in ſuch a manner, that they love to be his ſervants, and do willingly and readily obey him, without diſſimulation or conſtraint, without mercenarineſs or moroſity: in which they are unlike to the ſubjects of the kingdoms of this world, who are kept in their duties by fear and force, not from a pure kindneſs and benevolence of mind, to whom τὸ παρὸν ἀεὶ βαρύ, "the preſent "yoke is always grievous." Hence it is that the increaſe of this people is called their flowing unto the LORD, *Iſa.* ii. 2. *The mountain of the Lord's houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed, and all nations ſhall flow unto it*; and again, *Jer.* xxxi. 12. *They ſhall flow together*

gether to the goodneſs of the Lord. And the diſpoſition of this people is deſcribed to be a hearty and willing frame, *Eph.* vi. 6, 7. and elſewhere often to the ſame purpoſe. Now, this willingneſs or freeneſs of godly ſouls might be explained and confirmed by the conſideration both of their outward and inward acts.

1. As to the outward acts of ſervice which the true Chriſtian doth perform, he is freely carried out towards them, without any conſtraint or force. If he keep himſelf from the evils of the place, and age, and company, wherein he lives and converſes, it is not by a reſtraint which is upon him merely from without him, but by a principle of holy temperance planted in his ſoul: it is the ſeed of GOD abiding in him that preſerves him from the commiſſion of ſin, 1 *John* iii. 9. He is not kept back from ſin as a horſe by a bridle, but by an inward and ſpiritual change made in his nature. On the other hand, if he employ himſelf in any external acts of moral or inſtituted duty, he does it freely, not as of neceſſity, or by conſtraint. If you ſpeak of acts of charity, the godly man gives from a principle of love to GOD, and kindneſs to his brother, and ſo cheerfully, not grudgingly, or of neceſſity, 2 *Cor.* ix. 7. An alms may be wrung out of a miſer, but it proceeds from the liberal ſoul as a ſtream from its fountain: therefore he is called a deviſer of liberal things, and one that ſtandeth upon liberalities, as thoſe laſt words of *Iſa.* xxxii. 8. are rendered by the *Dutch* tranſlators. If you

ſpeak

ſpeak of righteouſneſs or temperance, he is not over-ruled by power, or compelled by laws, but indeed acted by the power of that law which is written and engraven upon his mind. If you ſpeak of acts of worſhip, whether moral or inſtituted, in all theſe he is alſo free, as to any conſtraint. Prayer is not his taſk, or a piece of penance, but it is the natural cry of the new-born ſoul; neither does he take it up as a piece of policy, to bribe GOD's juſtice, or engage mens charity, to purchaſe favour with GOD or man, or his own clamorous conſcience: but he prays, becauſe he wants, and loves, and believes; he wants the fuller preſence of that GOD whom he loves; he loves the preſence which he wants; he believes that he that loves him will not ſuffer him to want any good thing that he prays for. And therefore he does not bind up himſelf ſeverely, and limit himſelf penuriouſly to a morning and evening ſacrifice and ſolemnity, as unto certain rent-ſeaſons, wherein to pay a homage of dry devotion; but his loving and longing ſoul, diſdaining to be confined within canonical hours, is frequently ſoaring in ſome heavenly raptures or other, and ſallying forth in holy ejaculations: he is not content with ſome weak eſſays towards heaven, in ſet and formal prayer, once or twice a-day, but labours alſo to be all the day long ſucking in thoſe divine influences, and ſtreams of grace, by the mouth of faith, which he begged in the morning by the tongue of prayer; which hath made me ſometimes to think it a proper ſpeech to ſay, the

faith

faith of prayer, as well the prayer of faith; for be-
lieving, and hanging upon divine grace, doth really
drink in what prayer opens its mouth for, and is,
in effect, a powerful kind of praying in ſilence:
by believing we pray, as well as in praying we do
believe. A truly godly man hath not his hands
tied up merely by the force of a national law, no,
nor yet by the authority of the fourth command-
ment, to keep one in ſeven a day of reſt; as he is
not content with mere reſting upon the ſabbath,
knowing that neither working, nor ceaſing from
work, doth of itſelf commend a ſoul to GOD, but
doth preſs after intimacy with GOD in the duties
of his worſhip; ſo neither can he be content with
one ſabbath in a week, nor think himſelf abſolved
from holy and heavenly meditations any day in the
week; but labours to make every day a ſabbath,
as to the keeping of his heart up unto GOD in a
holy frame, and to find every day to be a ſabbath,
as to the communications of GOD unto his ſoul:
though the neceſſities of his body will not allow
him, it may be, (though indeed GOD hath granted
this to ſome men) to keep every day as a ſabbath
of reſt; yet the neceſſities of his ſoul do call upon
him to make every day, as far as may be, a ſabbath
of communion with the bleſſed GOD. If you ſpeak
of faſting, he keeps not faſts merely by virtue of a
civil, no, nor a divine inſtitution; but, from a
principle of godly ſorrow afflicts his ſoul for ſin,
and daily endeavours more and more to be emptied
of himſelf, which is the moſt excellent faſting in

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the world. If you ſpeak of thankſgiving, he does not give thanks by laws and ordinances, but having in himſelf a law of thankfulneſs, and an ordinance of love engraven upon, and deeply radicated in his ſoul, delights to live unto GOD, and to make his heart and life a living deſcant upon the goodneſs and love of GOD; which is the moſt divine way of thank-offering in the world; it is the hallelujah which the angels ſing continually. In a word, whereever GOD hath a tongue to command, true godlineſs will find an hand to perform; whatever yoke CHRIST JESUS ſhall put upon the ſoul, religion will enable to bear it, yea, and to count it eaſy too; the mouth of CHRIST hath pronounced it eaſy, *Matt.* xi. 30. and the Spirit of CHRIST makes it eaſy. Let the commandment be what it will, it will not be grievous, 1 *John* v. 3. The ſame ſpirit doth, in ſome meaſure, dwell in every Chriſtian, which without meaſure dwelt in CHRIST, who counted it his meat and drink to do the will of his Father, *John* iv. 34.

2. AND more eſpecially, the true Chriſtian is free from any conſtraint as to the inward acts which he performeth. Holy love to GOD is one principal act of the gracious ſoul, whereby it is carried out freely, and with an ardent love towards the object that is truly and infinitely lovely and ſatisfactory, and to the enjoyment of it. I know indeed that this ſprings from ſelf-indigency, and is commanded by the ſovereignty of the ſupreme good, the object that the ſoul eyes: but it is properly free

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from any constraint. Love is an affection that cannot be extorted as fear is; nor forced by any external power, nor indeed internal neither: the revenues of the King of *Persia*, or the treasures of *Egypt*, cannot commit a rape upon it, *Heb.* xi. 26. neither indeed can the soul itself raise and lay this spirit at pleasure; which made the Poet complain of himself, as if he were not sole emperor at home,

Non amo te Sabidi; nec possum dicere quare, &c.

THOUGH the outward bodily acts of religion are ordinarily forced, yet this pure, chaste, virgin-affection cannot be ravished; it seems to be a kind of a peculiar in the soul, though under the jurisdiction of the understanding. By this property of it, it is elegantly described by the Spirit of GOD, *Cant.* viii. 7. *If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.* It cannot be bought with money, or money-worth, cannot be purchased with gifts or arts; and if any should offer to bribe it, it would give him a sharp and scornful check, in the language of *Peter* to *Simon*, *Thy money perish with thee*; love is no hireling, no base-born mercenary affection, but noble, free, and generous. Neither is it low-spirited and slavish, as fear is: therefore, when it comes to full age, it will not suffer this son of the bond-woman to divide the inheritance, the dominions of the soul with it; when it comes to be *perfect*, *it casteth out fear*, says the Apostle, 1 *John* iv. 18. Neither indeed is it directly under the authority of any law, whether human or divine: it is not begotten by

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the influence of a divine law, as a law, but as holy, juſt, and good, as we ſhall ſee more anon: *Quis legem dat amantibus? ipſe eſt ſibi lex amor*: the law of love; or, if you will, in the Apoſtle's phraſe, *the ſpirit of love, and of power*, in oppoſition to the ſpirit of fear, 2 *Tim.* i. 7. doth more influence the godly man in his purſuit of GOD than any law without him: this is as a wing to the ſoul; whereas outward commandments are but as guides in his way, or, at moſt, but as ſpurs in his ſides.

THE ſame I may ſay of holy delight in GOD, which is indeed the flower of love, or love grown up to its full age and ſtature, which hath no torment in it, and conſequently no force upon it. Like unto which are holy confidence, faith, and hope, ingenuous and natural acts of the religious ſoul, whereby it haſtens into the divine embraces, *as the eagle haſteneth to the prey*, ſwiftly and ſpeedily, and not by force and conſtraint, *as a fool to the correction of the ſtocks*, or a bear to the ſtake. Theſe are all genuine offſprings of holy religion in the ſoul, and they are utterly incapable of force; violence is contrary to the nature of them; for to uſe the Apoſtle's words, with the change of one word, *Hope that is forced, is not hope.*

Now a little farther to explain this excellent property of true religion, we may a little conſider the author, and the object of it.

THE author of this noble and free principle is GOD himſelf, who hath made it a partaker of his own nature, who is the free agent; himſelf is the

fountain of his own acts. The uncreated life and liberty hath given this privilege to the religious ſoul, in ſome ſenſe, to have life and liberty in itſelf, and a dominion over its own acts. I do not know that any created being in the world hath more of divinity in it than the ſoul of man, *Qua nihil homini dedit Deus ipſe divinius*, as *Tully* ſpeaks; nor that any thing in the ſoul doth more reſemble the divine eſſence, than the noble freedom that the ſoul hath in itſelf; which freedom is never ſo divine and generous, as when it has GOD himſelf for its object. This excellent freedom is ſomething of GOD in the ſoul of man, and therefore may juſtly claim the free ſpirit for its author, *Pſalm* li. 12. 2 *Cor.* iii. 17. or the Son of GOD for its original, according to that in *John* viii. 36. *If the Son ſhall make you free, then ſhall ye be free indeed.*

BUT here it may be demanded, whether the command of GOD doth not act the godly ſoul, and ſet it upon its holy motions? I confeſs indeed that the command of GOD is much eyed by a godly man, and is of great weight with him, and does in ſome ſenſe lay a conſtraint upon him; but yet I think not ſo much the authority of the law, as the reaſonableneſs and goodneſs of it, does prevail principally with him. The religious ſoul does not ſo much eye the law under the notion of a command, as under the notion of holy, juſt, and good, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, and ſo embraces it, chooſes it, and longs to be perfectly conformable to it. I do not think it ſo proper to ſay that a good man

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loves GOD, and all righteouſneſs and holineſs, and religious duties, by virtue of a command to do ſo, as by virtue of a new nature that GOD hath put into him, which doth inſtruct and prompt him ſo to do. A religious ſoul being reconciled to the nature of GOD, does embrace all his laws by virtue of the equitableneſs and perfection that he ſees in them; not becauſe they are commanded, but becauſe they are in themſelves to be deſired, as *David* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* xix. 10. In which Pſalm the holy man gives us a full account why he did ſo love and eſteem the laws and commandments of GOD, namely, becauſe they are perfect, right, pure, clean, true, ſweet, and lovely, as you will find, *ver.* 7—10. To love the LORD our GOD with all our heart, and ſtrength, and mind, is not only a duty, by virtue of that firſt and great commandment that doth require it; but indeed the higheſt privilege, honour, and happineſs of the ſoul. To this purpoſe may that profeſſion of the Pſalmiſt's be applied, *Pſalm* cxix. 173. *I have choſen thy precepts*; and, *ver.* 30. *I have choſen the way of truth.* Chooſing is an act of judgment and underſtanding, and reſpects the quality of the thing, more than the authority of the command. *David* did not ſtumble into the way of truth accidentally, by virtue of his education, or acquaintance, or the like circumſtance; nor was he laſhed or driven into it by the mere ſeverity of a law without him; but he choſe the way of truth, as that which was indeed moſt eligible, pleaſant, and deſirable. What

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our bleſſed SAVIOUR ſays concerning himſelf, is alſo true of every true Chriſtian in his meaſure; he makes it his meat and drink to do the will of GOD. Now, we know that men do not eat and drink becauſe phyſicians preſcribe it as a means to preſerve life; but the ſenſual appetite is carried out towards food, becauſe it is good, ſweet, and ſuitable: and ſo the ſpiritual appetite is carried out towards ſpiritual food, not ſo much by the force of an external precept, as by the attractive power of that higher good which it finds ſuitable and ſufficient for it. As for the object of this free and generous ſpirit of religion, it is no other than GOD himſelf principally and ultimately, and other things only as they are ſubſervient to the enjoyment of him. GOD, as the ſupreme good, able to fill, and perfectly ſatisfy all the wants and indigencies of the ſoul, and ſo to make it wholly and eternally happy, is the proper object of the ſoul's moſt free and chearful motions. The ſoul eyes GOD as the perfect and abſolute good, and GOD in CHRIST as an attainable good, and ſo finds every way enough in this object, to encourage it to purſue after him, and throw himſelf upon him. Religion fixes upon GOD, as upon its own centre, as upon its proper and adequate object; it views GOD as the infinite and abſolute good, and ſo is drawn to him without any external force. The godly ſoul is overpowered indeed, but it is only with the infinite goodneſs of GOD, which exerciſes its ſovereignty over all the faculties of the ſoul; which overpower-

ing is ſo far from ſtraitning or pinching it, that it makes it truly free and generous in its motions. Religion wings the ſoul, and makes it take a flight freely and ſwiftly towards GOD and eternal life: it is of GOD, and by a ſympathy that it hath with him, it carries the ſoul out after him, and into conjunction with him. In a word, the godly ſoul being looſed from ſelf-love, emptied of ſelf-fulneſs, beaten out of all ſelf-ſatisfaction, and delivered from all ſelf-confining luſts, wills, intereſts, and ends, and being mightily overcome with a ſenſe of a higher and more excellent good, goes after that freely, centres upon it firmly, graſps after it continually, and had rather be that than what itſelf is, as ſeeing that the nature of that ſupreme good is infinitely more excellent and deſirable than its own.

THUS have I briefly explained and confirmed the freeneſs of this principle in the truly godly ſoul: I would now make ſome little improvement of it, but that it ſeems needful I ſhould here interweave a cautionary conceſſion or two.

1ſt, IT muſt be granted, that ſome things without the ſoul may be motives, in our common ſenſe, and encouragements to the ſoul to quicken, and haſten, and ſtrengthen it in its religious acts. Though grace be an internal principle, and moſt free from any conſtraint, yet it may be excited, or ſtirred up, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Tim.* i. 6. by ſuch means as GOD hath appointed hereunto, as prayer, meditation, reading, as the Apoſtle intimates in the body of that fore-quoted epiſtle. But perhaps there will a queſtion

queſtion ariſe concerning ſome other things, which may ſeem to lay a conſtraint upon the ſpirits of men. I deny not but that the ſeemingly religious motions of many men are merely violent, and their devotion is purely forced, as we ſhall ſee by and by: but I affirm, and I think have confirmed it, that true and ſincere religion is perfectly free and unconſtrained. This being premiſed, now, if you aſk me, what I think of afflictions; I confeſs GOD doth ordinarily uſe them as means to make good men better, and it may be ſometimes to make bad men good: theſe may be as weights to haſten and ſpeed the ſoul's motions towards GOD, but they do not principally beget ſuch motions. If you aſk me of temporal proſperity, commonly called mercies and bleſſings, of promiſes and rewards propounded; I confeſs they may be as oil to the wheels, and ought to quicken and encourage to the ſtudy of true and powerful godlineſs; but they are not the ſpring of the ſoul's motions; they ought to be unto us, as dew upon the graſs to refreſh and fructify the ſoul; but it is the root which properly gives life and growth.

2*dly*, IT may be granted, that there is a kind of conſtraint and neceſſity lying upon the godly ſoul in its holy and moſt excellent motions; according to that of the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* v. 14. *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*; and again, 1 *Cor.* ix. 16. *Neceſſity is laid upon me* to preach the goſpel. But yet it holds good, that grace is a moſt free principle in the ſoul, and that where the Spirit of the

LORD is, there is liberty. For the conſtraint that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of is not oppoſed to freedom of ſoul, but to not acting; now, although the ſoul, ſo principled and ſpirited, cannot but act, yet it acts freely. Thoſe things that are according to nature, though they be done neceſſarily, yet are they done with the greateſt freedom imaginable. The water flows, and the fire burns neceſſarily, yet freely. Religion is a new nature in the ſoul; and the religious ſoul being touched effectually with the ſenſe, and impreſſed with the influences of divine goodneſs, fulneſs, and perfection, is carried indeed neceſſarily towards GOD, as its proper centre, and yet its motions are pure, free, generous, and with the greateſt delight and pleaſure conceivable. The neceſſity that lay upon *Paul* to preach the goſpel is not to be underſtood of any external violence that was done to him, much leſs of bodily neceſſity, by reaſon of which many men ſerve their own bellies in that great function, more than the LORD JESUS; for though he preached the goſpel neceſſarily, yet did he preach freely and willingly, as he often profeſſeth. The godly man cannot but love GOD as his chiefeſt good, yet he delights in this neceſſity under which he lieth, and is exceeding glad that he finds his heart framed and enlarged to love him. I ſay enlarged, becauſe GOD is ſuch an object, as does not contract and pinch and ſtraiten the ſoul, as all created objects do, but ennoble, ampliate, and enlarge it. The ſinful ſoul, the more it lets out, and lays out, and ſpends itſelf upon

upon the creature, the more it is ſtraitened and contracted, and the native freedom of it is enſlaved, debaſed, and deſtroyed: but grace does eſtabliſh and ennoble the freedom of the ſoul, and reſtore it to its primitive perfection: ſo that a godly ſoul is never more at large, more at reſt, more at liberty, than when it finds itſelf delivered from all ſelf-confining creature-loves and luſts, and under the moſt powerful influences and conſtraint of infinite love and goodneſs.

By this that hath been ſaid of the free and generous ſpirit of true religion, we may learn what to think of the forced devotion of many preſſed ſoldiers of Christ in his church militant; that there is a vaſt difference and diſtance between the preſſed, and unpreſſed Chriſtian. Though indeed the freedom of the will cannot be deſtroyed, yet, in oppoſition to a principle, many mens devotion may be ſaid to be wrung out of them, and their obedience may be ſaid to be conſtrained. I ſhall explain it briefly in two or three particulars.

1. Men force themſelves, many times, to ſome things in religion that are beſides, yea, and againſt their nature and genius. I need not inſtance in a ſlight conformity to the letter of the law, and ſome external duties which they force themſelves to perform, as to hear, pray, give alms, or the like: in all which the violent and unnatural obedience of a Phariſee may be more popular and ſpecious, than the true and genuine obedience of a free-born diſciple of Jesus Christ. If going on hunting,

and catching of veniſon might denominate a good and dutiful ſon, *Eſau* may indeed be as acceptable to his father as *Jacob*; but GOD is not ſuch a father as *Iſaac*, whoſe affections were bribed with fat morſels; he feeds not upon the pains of his children, nor drinks the ſweat of their brows. I doubt not but that an unprincipled Chriſtian, that hath the heart of a ſlave, may alſo force himſelf to imitate the more ſpiritual part of religion, and, as it were, to act over the very temper and diſpoſition of a ſon of GOD. Therefore we read of a ſemblance of joy and zeal which was found in ſome, whom yet our SAVIOUR reckons no better than *ſtony ground*, Mark iv. 16. and of great extaſies in ſome, whom yet the Apoſtle ſuppoſes may come to nothing, *Heb.* vi. 5. and what appearance of the moſt excellent and divine graces of patience, and contempt of the world, many of the ſourer ſort of monaſtical Papiſts, and our mungrel breed of Papiſts, the Quakers, do make at this day, all men know: nay, ſome of theſe laſt ſort do ſeem to themſelves, I believe, to act over the temper and experiences of the chiefeſt Apoſtles, rejoicing with *Peter*, and the reſt, that they are *counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame*, Acts v. 41. and keeping a catalogue of their ſtripes with *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* xi. 24. and in theſe things I am confident, to uſe the Apoſtle's words, that they think themſelves *not a whit behind the very chiefeſt Apoſtles*: nay, they are not aſhamed to lay claim to that grace of graces ſelf-denial, which they have forced themſelves to act over ſo artificially,

ally, that even a wiſe man might almoſt be deceived into a favourable opinion of them, but that we know that whilſt they profeſs it they deſtroy it; for it is contrary to the nature of ſelf-denial, to magnify and boaſt itſelf: and indeed it is very evident to a wiſe obſerver, that theſe men, by a pretence of voluntary humility, and counterfeit ſelf-denial, do, in truth, endeavour moſt of all to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, and erect an idol of ſelf-ſupremacy in themſelves, and do really fall in love with an αὐτάρκεια, or ſelf-ſufficiency, inſtead of the infinite fulneſs of God.

Now there ſeem to be three things in a formal hypocrite that do eſpecially force a kind of devotion, and ſhew of religion from him, namely, conſcience of guilt, ſelf-love, and falſe apprehenſions of God. *1ſt*, There is in all men a natural conſcience of guilt, ariſing from that imperfect and glimmering light they have of God, and of their duty towards him; which, though it be in ſome men more quick and ſtinging, in others more remiſs and languid, yet, I think, is not utterly extinguiſhed and choked, no not in the worſt and moſt diſſolute men, but that it doth ſometimes beget a bitter ſadneſs in the midſt of their ſweeteſt merriments, and doth diſturb their moſt ſupine and ſecure reſt, by faſtening its ſtings in their very ſouls at ſome time or other, and filling them with agonies and anguiſh, and haunting them with dreadful apparitions, which they cannot be perfectly rid of, no more than they can run away from themſelves.

ſelves. This foundation of hell is laid in the bowels of ſin itſelf, as a preface to eternal horror. Now, although ſome more profligate and deſperate wretches do furiouſly bluſter through theſe briers, yet others are ſo caught in them, that they cannot eſcape theſe pangs and throws, except they make a compoſition, and enter into terms to live more honeſtly, or at leaſt, leſs ſcandalouſly. In which undertaking they are carried on in the ſecond place, by the power of ſelf-love, or a natural deſire of ſelf-preſervation: for the worſt of men hath ſo much reaſon left him, that he could wiſh that himſelf were happy, though he have not ſo much light as to diſcover, nor ſo much true freedom of will as to chooſe, the right way to happineſs. Conſcience having diſcovered the certain reward and wages of ſin, ſelf-love will eaſily prompt men to do ſomething or other to eſcape it. But now, what ſhall they do? why, religion is the only expedient that can be found out; and therefore they begin to think how they may become friends with GOD; they will up and be doing. But how come they to run into ſo great a miſtake about religion? why, their falſe and groſs apprehenſions of GOD, in the third place, do drive them from him, in the way of ſuperſtition and hypocriſy, inſtead of leading them in the way of ſincere love, and ſelf-reſignation to him. Self being the great *Diana* of every natural man, and the only ſtandard by which he meaſures all things, he knows not how to judge of GOD himſelf, but by this; and ſo he comes to fancy GOD in a dreadful manner, as an auſtere, paſſionate,

paſſionate, ſurly, revengeful majeſty, and ſo ſomething muſt be done to appeaſe him: but yet he fancies this angry deity to be of an impotent, mercenary temper like himſelf, and not hard to be appeaſed neither; and ſo imagines that ſome cheap ſervices, ſpecious oblations, external courteſies, will engage him, and make him a friend; a ſheep, or a goat, or a bullock, under the Old Teſtament; a prayer, or a ſacrament, or an alms, under the New: for it is reconciliation to an angry GOD that he aims at, not union with a good GOD; he ſeeks to be reconciled to GOD, not united to him, though indeed theſe two can never be divided. Thus we ſee how a man void of the life and ſpirit of religion, yet forces himſelf to do GOD a kind of worſhip, and pay him a kind of homage.

2*dly*, SOMETIMES men may be ſaid, in a ſenſe, to be forced by other men, to put on a vizard of holineſs, a dreſs of religion. And this conſtraint men may lay upon men by their tongues, hands, and eyes. By their tongues, in the buſineſs of education, often and ardent exhortation and inculcation of things divine and heavenly: and thus an unjuſt man, like the unjuſt judge in the goſpel, though he fear not GOD ſincerely, yet may be overcome by the importunity of his father, friend, miniſter, tutor, to do ſome righteous acts. This ſeems to have been the caſe of *Joaſh* king of *Judah*, the ſpring-head of whoſe religion was no higher than the inſtructions of his tutor and guardian *Jehoiada* the high-prieſt, 2 *Kings* xii. 2. By

their hands; that is, either by the enacting and executing of penal laws upon them, or by the holy example which they continually ſet before them, *exempla trahunt.* By their eyes; that is, by continual obſerving and watching their behaviour; when many eyes are upon men, they muſt do ſomething to ſatisfy the expectations of others, and purchaſe a reputation to themſelves. It may be ſaid, that ſometimes GOD doth lay an external force upon men; as particularly by his ſevere judgments, or threatnings of judgments, awakening them, humbling them, and conſtraining them to ſome kind of worſhip and religion. Such a forced devotion as this was the humiliation of *Ahab*, 1 Kings xxi. 27. and the ſupplication of *Saul*, 1 Sam. xiii. 11, 12. For GOD himſelf acting upon men, only from without them, is far from producing a living principle of free and noble religion in the ſoul.

NOW, the better to diſcern this forced and violent religion, I will briefly deſcribe it by three or four of its properties, with which I will ſhut up this point.

1. THIS forced religion is, for the moſt part, dry and ſpiritleſs. I know, indeed, that fancy may be ſcrewed up to a high pitch of joy and tranſport, ſo as to raiſe the mind into a kind of rapture, as I have formerly hinted in my diſcourſe upon theſe words. A mere artificial and counterfeit Chriſtian may be ſo ſtrongly acted by imagination, and the power of ſelf-love, that he may ſeem to himſelf to be fuller of GOD than the ſober and conſtant ſoul.

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You may ſee how the hypocritical Phariſees, ſwolden with ſelf-conceit, gloried over the poor man that had been blind, but now ſaw more than all they; *John* ix. 34. *Thou waſt altogether born in ſin, and doſt thou teach us?* and indeed over the whole people, *John* vii. 49. *This people that knoweth not the law is curſed.* A counterfeit Chriſtian may riſe high as a meteor, and blaze much as a comet, which is yet drawn up by mere force from the ſurface of the earth or water. And as to the external and viſible acts and duties of religion, which depend much upon the temper and conſtitution of the body, it may eaſily be conceived and accounted, how the mimical and mechanical Chriſtian may riſe higher in theſe, and be more zealous, watchful, and cheerful, than many truly religious and godly men, as having greater power and quickneſs of fancy, and a greater number of animal ſpirits; upon which the motions and actions of the body do mainly depend. The animal ſpirits may ſo nimbly ſerve the ſoul in the corporal acts, that the whole tranſaction may be a fair imitation of the motions of the divine Spirit, and one would verily think there were a gracious principle in the ſoul itſelf. This ſeems to be notably exemplified in Captain *Jehu*, whoſe religious actions, as he would fain have them to be eſteemed, 2 *Kings* x. 16. were indeed rather fury than zeal, and proceeded more from his own fiery ſpirits, than from that ſpirit of fire, or ſpirit of burning, which is of GOD, *Iſaiah* iv. 4. But commonly this forced devotion is je-

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june and dry, void of zeal and warmth, and drives on heavily in purſuit of the GOD of *Iſrael*, as *Pharaoh* did in purſuit of the *Iſrael* of GOD, when his chariot-wheels were taken off, *Exod.* xiv. 25. GOD's drawing the ſoul from within, as a principle, doth indeed cauſe that ſoul to run after him, *Cant.* i. 4. but you know the motion of thoſe things that are drawn by external force is commonly heavy, ſlow, and languid.

2. THIS forced religion is penurious and needy. Something the ſlaviſh-ſpirited Chriſtian muſt do to appeaſe an angry GOD, or to allay a ſtorming conſcience, as I hinted before; but it ſhall be as little as may be. He is ready to grudge GOD ſo much of his time and ſtrength, and to find fault that ſabbaths come ſo thick, and laſt ſo long, and that duties are to be performed ſo often: ſo he is deſcribed by the prophet, *Amos* viii. 5. *When will the ſabbath be paſt, and the new moon gone?* But yet I will not deny, but that this kind of religion may be very liberal and expenſive too, and run out much into the branches of external duties, as is the manner of many trees that bear no fruit; for ſo did the baſe ſpirit of the Phariſees, whoſe often faſting, and long praying, is recorded by our SAVIOUR in the goſpel, but not with approbation. Therefore theſe are not the things by which you muſt take meaſure, and make eſtimate of your religion. But in the great things of the law, in the grand duties of mortification, ſelf-denial, and reſignation; here this forced religion is always very ſtingy and penurious.

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In the duties that do nearly touch upon their beloved luſts, they will be as ſtrict with GOD as may be, they will break with him for a ſmall matter: GOD muſt have no more than his due, as they blaſphemouſly phraſe it in their hearts; with the ſlothful ſervant in the goſpel, *Lo, there thou haſt that is thine*; ſelf and the world ſure may be allowed the reſt. They will not part with all for CHRIST, *Matt.* xix. 22. is it not a little one? let me eſcape thither, and take up my abode there, ſaid *Lot*, Gen. xix. 20. They will not give up themſelves entirely unto GOD; *the Lord pardon me in this one thing*, cries *Naaman*; ſo they, in this or that, let GOD hold me excuſed. The ſlaviſh-ſpirited Chriſtian is never more ſhrunk up within himſelf, than when he is to converſe with GOD indeed: but the godly ſoul is never freer, larger, gladder, than when he doth moſt intimately and familiarly converſe with GOD. The ſoul that is free as to liberty, is free alſo as to liberality and expences; and that not only in external, but internal and ſpiritual obedience, and compliance with the will of GOD: he gives himſelf wholly up to GOD, knows no intereſt of his own, keeps no reſerve for himſelf, or for the creature.

3. THIS forced religion is uneven, as depending upon inconſtant cauſes. As land-floods, that have no ſpring within themſelves, vary their motions, are ſwift and ſlow, high and low, according as they are ſupplied with rain; even ſo theſe mens motions in religion, depending upon fancy for the

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moſt part, than which nothing is more fickle and flitting, have no conſtancy nor conſiſtency in them. I know indeed, that the ſpirits of the beſt men cannot always keep one pace, nor their lives be always of one piece; but yet they are never willingly quite out of the call or compaſs of religion. But this I alſo touched upon formerly. Therefore,

4. THIS forced religion is not permanent. The meteors will down again, and be choked in the earth whence they aroſe. Take away the weight, and the motion ceaſes; take away *Jehoiada*, and *Joaſh* ſtands ſtill, yea runs backward. But this I ſhall ſpeak more unto, when I come to ſpeak of the laſt property of religion, *viz.* its perſeverance.

CHAP. IV.

The active and vigorous nature of true religion proved by many ſcriptural phraſes of the moſt powerful importance: more particularly explained in three things; 1ſt, *In the ſoul's continual care and ſtudy to be good.* 2dly, *In its care to do good.* 3dly, *In its powerful and inceſſant longings after the moſt full enjoyment of* GOD. *In all which the cauſes and reaſons of the ſame are either more obſcurely intimated, or openly aſſigned.*

I Come now to the ſecond property of true religion, which is to be found in this phraſe, ἁλλομένη, *ſpringing up*, or leaping up; wherein the activity

activity and vigorousneſs of it is deſcribed. Religion, though it be compared to water, yet is no ſtanding pool of water, but *a well of water* ſpringing up. And here the propoſition that I ſhall go upon, is, "That true religion is active and vigo-"rous." It is no lazy and languid thing, but full of life and power: ſo I find it every where deſcribed in ſcripture, by things that are moſt active, lively, vigorous, operative, ſpreading, powerful, and ſometimes even by motion itſelf. As ſin is, in ſcripture, deſcribed by death and darkneſs, which are a ceſſation and privation of life, and light, and motion: ſo religion is deſcribed by life, which is active and vigorous; by an angelical life, which is ſpiritual and powerful; yea, a divine life, *Eph.* iv. 18. which is, as I may ſay, moſt lively and vivacious. *Chriſt liveth in me*, Gal. ii. 20. and the production of this new nature in the ſoul is called a quickening, *Eph.* ii. 1. and the reception of it a *paſſing from death unto life*, John v. 24. Again, as ſin and wickedneſs are deſcribed by fleſh, which is ſluggiſh and unactive, ſo this holy principle in the ſoul is called Spirit, *Gal.* v. 17. *The Spirit luſteth againſt the fleſh*; yea, the *Spirit of power*, 2 Tim. i. 7. and the *Spirit of life*, Rom. viii. 2. *The law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.* How can the power and activity of any principle be more commended, than by ſaying it is life, and the *Spirit of life*, and *the law of the Spirit of life* in the ſoul? which hath made me ſometimes to apply thoſe words of the prophet,

prophet, as a deſcription of every godly ſoul, *Micah* iii. 8. *I am full of power and might by the Spirit of the Lord.*

YEA, further, the holy apoſtle ſeems to deſcribe a godly principle in the ſoul by activity and motion itſelf, *Phil.* iii. 12, 13, 14. where he gives this excellent character of himſelf, and this lively deſcription of his religious diſpoſition, as if it were nothing elſe but activity and fervour; I follow after, that I may apprehend; I forget thoſe things that are behind, and reach forth unto thoſe things that are before; I preſs towards the mark, &c. It were too much to comment upon thoſe phraſes of like importance, *labouring*, *ſeeking*, *ſtriving*, *fighting*, *running*, *wreſtling*, *panting*, *longing*, *hungering*, *thirſting*, *watching*, and many others, which the HOLY GHOST makes uſe of up and down the ſcriptures, to expreſs the active, induſtrious, vigorous, diligent, and powerful nature of this divine principle, which GOD hath put into the ſouls of his elect. The ſtreams of divine grace, which flow forth from the throne of GOD, and of the Lamb, into the ſouls of men, do not cleanſe them, and ſo paſs away, like ſome violent land flood, that waſhes the fields and meadows, and ſo leaves them to contract as much filth as ever; but the ſame becomes a *well of water*, continually ſpringing up, boiling, and bubbling, and working in the ſoul, and ſending out freſh rivers, ὕδατος ζῶντος, as our SAVIOUR calls them, *John* vii. 38. *Out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water.*

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BUT, more particularly, to unfold the active nature of this divine principle in the ſoul, we ſhall conſider it in theſe three particulars, *viz.* as it is ſtill conforming to GOD, doing for him, and longing after him.

1. THE active and ſprightly nature of true godlineſs, or religion planted by GOD in the ſoul, appears and ſhews itſelf in a continued care and ſtudy to be good, to conform more and more to the nature of the bleſſed GOD, the glorious pattern of all perfection. The nature of GOD being infinitely and abſolutely perfect, is the only rule of perfection to the creature. If we ſpeak of goodneſs, our SAVIOUR tells us, that GOD alone is good, *Luke* xviii. 19. of wiſdom, the Apoſtle tells us, that GOD is only wiſe, 1 *Tim.* i. 17. of power, he is omnipotent, *Rev.* xix. 6. of mercy and kindneſs, he is love itſelf, 1 *John* iv. 8. Men are only good by way of participation from GOD, and in a way of aſſimilation to him: ſo that, though good men may be imitated, and followed, yet it muſt be with a *quatenus*, with this limitation, as far forth as they are followers of GOD: the great Apoſtle durſt not preſs his example any further, 1 *Cor.* xi. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.* But the nature of GOD being infinitely and abſolutely perfect, is to be eyed and imitated ſingly, entirely, univerſally, in all things wherein the creature is capable of following him, and becoming like unto him. So Chriſtians are required to look up unto the Father of lights, the fountain of

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all perfections, and to take from him the pattern of their dispositions, and conversations, to eye him continually, and eying him, ἀγάλματα θεῖα τεκταίνειν, to derive an image of him, not into their eye, as we do by sensible objects, but into their souls, to polish and frame them into the most clear and lively resemblances of him; that is, in the language of the scripture, to be *perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect*, Matt. v. 44, 45, 48. to be *holy as God is holy*, 1 Pet. i. 16. And thus the genuine children of GOD are described by the HOLY GHOST, *Eph.* v. 1. they are *followers of God*. This is the shortest, but the surest, and cleerest mark that can be given of a good man, *a follower of God*: they are not owned for the children of GOD, who are created by him, nor they who have a notional knowledge of him, who profess him, or exhibit some external worship, and service to him in the world, but they that imitate him: the true children of *Abraham* were not those that were descended from him, or boasted of him, but they that did the works of *Abraham*, John viii. 39. even so are they only the offspring of heaven, the true and dear children of the living GOD, who are followers of him; *be ye followers of God as dear children*. A godly soul having its eyes opened to behold the infinite beauty, purity, and perfection, of that good GOD whose nature is the very fountain, and must needs then be the rule of all goodness, presently comes to undervalue all created excellencies, both in itself and all the world besides, as to any satis-

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faction that is to be had in them, or any perfection that can be acquired by them, and cannot endure to take up with any lower good, or live by any lower rule than GOD himself. A godly man having the unclean and rebellious spirit cast out, and being once reconciled to the nature of GOD, is daily labouring to be more intimately united thereunto, and to be all that which GOD is, as far as he is capable, the nature of GOD being infinitely more pure and perfect, and more desirable than his own. Religion is a participation of life from him, who is life itself, and so must needs be an active principle spreading itself in the soul, and causing the soul to spread itself in GOD; and therefore the kingdom of heaven, which in many places of the gospel I take to be nothing else but this divine principle in the soul, which is both the truest heaven, and most properly a kingdom (for thereby GOD doth most powerfully reign and exercise his sovereignty, and most excellently display and manifest his glory in the world) is compared to *seed sown in good ground*, which both springeth up into a blade, and bringeth forth fruit; to mustard-seed, which spreadeth itself, and groweth great, so that the birds of the air may lodge in the branches thereof; to leaven, spreading itself through the whole quantity of meal, and leavening the whole, and all the parts of it, *Matt.* xiii. 23, 31, 33. By a like similitude, the path of the just is compared to a shining light, whose glory and lustre increaseth continually, *shining more and more unto the perfect day*,

Prov.

Prov. iv. 18. which continual growing up of the holy soul into GOD, is excellently described by the Apostle in an elegant metaphor, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. *We all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory*; that is, from one resemblance of divine glory to another. The gracious soul not being content with its present attainments, and having in its eye a perfect and absolute good, forgets that which is behind, and labours, prays, strives and studies, to get the perfections of GOD more clearly copied out upon itself, and itself, as much as may be, swallowed up in the divinity. It covets earnestly these best things, to be perfected in grace and holiness, to have divine characters more fair and legible, divine impressions more deep and lively, divine life more strong and powerful, and the communicable image of the blessed GOD spread quite over it, and through it. A godly soul is not content to receive of CHRIST's fulness, but labours to be filled with the fulness, with all the fulness of GOD; he rejoices indeed that he hath received of CHRIST grace for grace, as a child hath limb for limb with his father; but this his joy is not fulfilled, except he find himself adding daily some cubits to his infant-stature; nor indeed then neither, nor can it be, until he come to the measure of the stature of his LORD, and be grown up into him in all things who is the head, even CHRIST, *Eph.* iv. 15. He delights and glories in GOD, beholding his spices growing in his soul; but that does not

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ſatisfy him, except he may ſee them flowing out alſo, *Cant.* iv. 16. He is neither barren nor unfruitful, as the Apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaks; but that is not enough, he deſires to be fat and fruitful alſo, as a watered garden, as the Prophet phraſeth it, even as the garden of GOD. The ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh, and ſtruggles with it in the ſame womb of the ſoul, as *Jacob* with *Eſau*, until he had caſt him out. The ſeed of GOD warreth continually againſt the ſeed of the ſerpent, raging and reſtleſs, like *Jehu*, ſhooting, and ſtabbing, and ſtrangling all he meets with, till none at all remain of the family of that *Ahab* who had formerly been his maſter. O how does the godly and devout ſoul long to have CHRIST's victory carried on in itſelf, to have CHRIST going on in him conquering and to conquer, till at length the very laſt enemy be ſubdued, that the Prince of Peace may ride triumphantly through all the coaſts and regions of his heart and life, and not ſo much as a dog move his tongue againſt him! This holy principle which is of GOD in the ſoul, is actually induſtrious too; it doth not fold the arms together, hide its hand in its boſom, faintly wiſhing to obtain a final conqueſt over its enemies, but advances itſelf with a noble ſtoutneſs againſt luſts and paſſions, even as the ſun glorieth againſt the darkneſs of the night, until it have chaſed it all away. The godly ſoul puts itſelf under the banner of CHRIST, fights under the conduct of the angel of GOD's preſence, and ſo marches up undauntedly againſt the children

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of *Anak*, those earthly loves, lusts, sensual affections, which are indeed taller and stronger than all other enemies that do encounter it in this wilderness state: and the gracious GOD is not wanting to such endeavours, he *remembering his promise, helpeth his servants*, even that promise, *Isa.* xl. 31. that *they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength.* A true Israelitish soul, impregnated with this noble and heroic principle, is not like those slothful Israelites, that were content with what they had got of the holy land, and either could not, or cared not to enlarge their border, *Judges* i. But he makes war upon the remainder of the *Canaanites*, and is never at rest till he have, with *Sarah*, cast out the bond-woman and her son too. You may see an emblem of such a soul in *Moses* holding up his hands all the day long, till *Amalek* was quite discomfited, *Exod.* xvii. 12. As often as the floods of temptation, springing from the devil, the world, or the flesh, do offer to come in upon him, he opposeth them in the strength of CHRIST; or, if you will, in the Prophet's phrase, *Isa.* lix. 19. *The Spirit of the Lord lifteth up a standard against them*; so that he is not carried down by them, or, at least, not overwhelmed with them. In the beginning of my discourse upon this head, I hinted to you the reason why the godly soul continually studies conformity to GOD, even because he is the perfect and absolute good, and the soul reckons that its happiness consists only in being like unto him, in partaking of a divine nature. But I might

alſo here take occaſion to ſpeak of three things, which I will but briefly name, and ſo paſs on.

1*ſt*, A GODLY man reckons with himſelf, that conformity to the image and nature of GOD, is the moſt proper converſing with GOD in the world. The great, and indeed only employment of an immortal ſoul, is to converſe with its Creator; for this end it was made, and made ſo capacious as we ſee it: now, to partake of a divine nature, to be endued with a god-like diſpoſition, is moſt properly to converſe with GOD; this is a real, powerful, practical, and feeling converſe with him, infinitely to be preferred before all notions, profeſſions, performances, or ſpeculations.

2*dly*, A GODLY man reckons that the image of GOD is the glory and ornament of the ſoul; it is the luſtre, and brightneſs, and beauty of the ſoul, as the ſoul is of the body. Holineſs is not only the duty, but the higheſt honour and dignity that any created nature is capable of: and therefore the godly ſoul, who hath his ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern good and evil, purſues after it, as after his full and proper perfection.

3*dly*, A GODLY man reckons, that conformity to the divine image, participation of the divine nature, is the ſureſt and moſt comfortable evidence of divine love, which is a matter of ſo great inquiry in the world. By growing up daily in CHRIST JESUS, we are infallibly aſſured of our implantation into him. The Spirit of GOD deſcending upon the ſoul in the impreſſions of meek-

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neſs, kindneſs, uprightneſs, which is a dove-like diſpoſition, is a better, and more deſirable evidence of our ſonſhip, and GOD's favour towards us, than if we had the Spirit deſcending upon our heads in a dove-like ſhape, as it did upon our bleſſed SAVIOUR. Theſe things may paſs for a kind of reaſons, why the religious Chriſtian, above all things, labours to become god-like, to be formed more and more into a reſemblance of the ſupreme good, and to drink in divine perfections into the very inmoſt of his ſoul.

2. THE active and induſtrious nature of true godlineſs, or religion, manifeſts itſelf in a good man's continual care, and ſtudy to do good, to ſerve the intereſt of the holy and bleſſed GOD in the world. A good man being overpowered with the ſenſe of the infinite goodneſs of GOD, and the great end of his life, cannot think it worth while to ſpend himſelf for any inferior good, or beſtow his time and ſtrength for any lower end than that is; and therefore, as it is the main happineſs of his life to enjoy GOD, ſo he makes it the main buſineſs of his life to ſerve him, to be doing for him, to lay out himſelf for him, and to diſplay, and propagate his glory in the world. And, as he is raviſhed with the apprehenſions of the ſupreme goodneſs, which doth infinitely deſerve, and may juſtly challenge all that he can do or expend for him, ſo he doth indeed really partake of the active and communicative nature of that bleſſed being, and himſelf becomes active and communicative too:

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a godly ſoul ſluggiſh and unactive, is as if one ſhould ſay, a godly ſoul altogether unlike to GOD; a pure contradiction. I cannot dwell upon any of thoſe particular deſigns of ſerving the intereſt of GOD's glory, which a good man is ſtill driving on in the world: only this, in general, whether he pray, or preach, or read, or celebrate ſabbaths, or adminiſter private reproof or inſtruction, or indeed plow or ſow, eat or drink, all this while he lives not to himſelf, but ſerves an higher intereſt than that of the fleſh, and a higher good than himſelf, or any created being. A true Chriſtian activity doth not only appear in thoſe things which we call duties of worſhip, or religious performances; but in the whole frame of the heart contriving, and the converſation expreſſing and unfolding the glory of GOD. A holy, ſerious, heavenly, humble, ſober, righteous, and ſelf-denying courſe of life, does moſt excellently expreſs the divine glory, by imitating the nature of GOD, and moſt effectually call all men to the imitation of it; according as our SAVIOUR hath nakedly ſtated the caſe, *John* xv. 8. *Hereby is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit:* by which fruit are not to be underſtood only preaching, praying, conference, which are indeed high and excellent duties; but alſo righteouſneſs, temperance, ſelf-denial, which things are pure reflections of the divine image, and a real glorifying of GOD's name and perfections. A good Chriſtian cannot be content to be happy alone, to be ſtill drawing down heaven

into his own ſoul; but he endeavours alſo by prayer, counſel, and holy example, to draw up the ſouls of other men heaven-ward. This GOD witneſſeth of *Abraham*, Gen. xviii. 19. *I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord:* And this *Moſes* doth excellently witneſs of himſelf in that holy rapture of his, *Numb.* xi. 29. *Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!* By ſuch examples as theſe a good man deſires to live, yea, by higher precedents than either *Abraham* or *Moſes*, even by the example of the FATHER and of the SON: he admires and ſtrives to imitate that character which is given of GOD himſelf, *Pſalm* cxix. 68. *Thou art good, and doſt good:* and that which is given of CHRIST JESUS, the LORD of life, *Acts* x. 38. who *went about doing good:* who alſo witneſſed elſewhere concerning himſelf, that he came not into the world to do his own will, nor ſeek his own glory, but the will and glory of him that ſent him: and again, *Luke* ii. 49. *Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?* O how happy would the godly ſoul count itſelf, if it could but live and converſe in the world at the ſame rate, and with the ſame devout, fervent, exalted ſpirit, as CHRIST JESUS did, whoſe meat and drink it was ſtill to be doing the will, and advancing the glory of his FATHER! But, alas! the poor ſoul finds itſelf enſnared by paſſions, and ſelfiſh affections from within, clogged with an unweildy body,

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and distracted with secular affairs from without, that it cannot rise so nimbly, run so swiftly, nor serve the infinite and glorious GOD so chearfully, nor liberally, as it would; and therefore the poor prisoner sighs within itself, and wishes that it might escape: but finding a certain time determined upon it in the body, which it must be content to live out, it looks up, and is ready to envy the angels of GOD, because it cannot live as they do, who are always upon GOD's errand, and almost thinks much that itself is not a ministring spirit, serving the pure and perfect will of the supreme good, without grudging or ceasing. The godly soul, under these powerful apprehensions of the nature of GOD, the example of CHRIST, and the honourable office of the holy angels, is ready to grudge the body that attendance that it calls for, and those offices which it is forced to perform to it; as judging them impertinent to its main happiness, and most excellent employment; it is ready to envy that more chearful and willing service, which it finds from the heavy and drossy body with which it is united; and to cry out, O that I were that to my GOD, which my body, my eyes, hands, and feet, are to me! for I say to one of these, *Go, and he goeth*; and to another, *Do this, and he doth it.* In a word, a good man being acquainted feelingly with the highest good, eying diligently the great end of his coming into the world, and his short time of being in it, serves the eternal and blessed GOD, lives upon eternal designs, and by consecrating all his actions un-

to GOD, gives a kind of an immortality to them, which are in themſelves flitting and tranſient: he counts it a reproach to any man, much more to a godly man, to do any thing inſignificantly, much more to live impertinently; and he reckons all things that have not a tendency to the higheſt good, and a ſubſerviency to the great and laſt end, to be impertinencies, yea, and abſurdities in an immortal ſoul, which ſhould continually be *ſpringing up into everlaſting life.*

3. THE active and vigorous nature of true religion manifeſts itſelf in thoſe powerful and inceſſant longings after GOD, with which it fills that ſoul in which it is implanted. This I ſuperadd to the two former, becauſe the godly man, though he be formed into ſome likeneſs to GOD, yet deſires to be more like him; and though he be ſomewhat ſerviceable to him, yet deſires to be more inſtrumental to his will: though he be good, yet he deſires to be better; and though he do good, yet he deſires to do better, or at leaſt more. And, indeed, I reckon that theſe ſincere and holy hungrings after GOD, which I am going to ſpeak of, are one of the beſt ſigns that I know in the world of ſpiritual health, and the beſt κριτήριον, or mark of a true Chriſtian: for, in this low and animal ſtate, we are better acquainted with lovings and languiſhings, than with fruition or ſatisfaction; and the beſt enjoyment that we have of GOD in this world is but ſcant and ſhort, indeed but a kind of longing to enjoy him. Love is certainly a high

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and noble affection; but, alas! our love, whilſt we are here in the body, is in its non-age, in its weak and ſickly ſtate, rather a longing than a loving, much unlike to what it will be when it ſhall be grown up unto its perfect ſtature in glory. But this ſickly kind of languiſhing affection is a certain ſymptom of a healthful conſtitution; or, as the Apoſtle calls it, of *the ſpirit of a ſound mind*. Godly ſouls are thirſty ſouls, always gaſping after the living ſprings of divine grace, even as the parched deſart gapeth for the dew of heaven, the early and the latter rain. One would wonder what kind of magic there was in *Elijah*'s mantle, that the very caſting of it upon *Eliſha* ſhould make him leave oxen and plough, yea, father and mother, and all to run after a ſtranger: *Elijah* himſelf ſeems to wonder at it, 1 *Kings* xix. 20. *What have I done to thee?* O but what a mighty charm is there in divine love! which when it is once ſhed abroad in the ſoul, makes the ſoul to ſpread itſelf in it and to it, as the heliotrope attending the motions of the ſun, and turning itſelf every way towards it, welcoming its warm and refreſhing beams. *Elijah* paſſing by *Eliſha* as he was at plough, and catching him with his mantle, is but a ſcant reſemblance of the bleſſed GOD paſſing by a carnal mind, and wrapping it in the mantle of his love, and thereby cauſing it to run, yea, to fly ſwiftly after him. If divine grace do but once touch the ſoul, the ſoul preſently ſticks to it, as the needle to the load-ſtone. They that heard CHRIST JESUS chiding

the winds and the waves, cried out, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!* but if one had been present when he called *James* and *John* from their nets, *Matthew* from the custom-house, and *Zaccheus* from the tree, and by calling made them willing to come, he would have cried out sure, What manner of God is this! that, by his bare word makes poor men leave their trades and livelihood, and rich men their gainful exactions, usuries, and oppressions, to follow him, and shews them no reason why. What a mighty virtue is there in the ointment of Christ's name, that as soon as it is poured out, the virgins fall in love with him? *Cant.* i. 3. *Micah* cried out when he was in pursuit of his gods, and should they ask him what ailed him? And will ye wonder that a holy soul, in pursuit of the holy God, should be in earnest; that he should run, and cry as he runs? as I have seen a fond child whom the father or mother have endeavoured to leave behind them. God breathing into the soul, makes the soul breathe after him, and in a mixture of holy disdain and anger, to thrust away from itself all distracting companions, occasions, and concernments, saying with *Ephraim* to her idols, *Get ye hence.* The soul thus inspired is so far from prostituting itself to any earthly, sensual, selfish lusts, and loves, that it cannot brook any thing that would weaken it in the prosecution of the highest good; it is impatient of every thing that would either stop or slacken its motions after God. The godly man desires still

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to be doing ſomething for GOD indeed; but if the caſe ſo fall out, that he cannot ſpend his life for GOD as he deſires, yet he will be ſpending his ſoul upon him: though he cannot perpetually abide upon the knee of prayer, yet he would be continually upon the wing of faith and love: when his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, that he cannot ſpeak for GOD, yet his ſoul ſhall cleave unto him, and complain becauſe it can ſpeak no longer: for faith and love are knitting graces, and do long to make the ſoul as much one with their object, as is poſſible for the creature to be with its Creator. Religion puts a reſtleſs appetite into the ſoul after a higher good, and makes it throw itſelf into his arms, and wind itſelf into his embraces, longing to be in a more intimate conjunction with him, or rather entirely wrapped up in him: itſelf is an inſatiable and covetous principle in the ſoul, much like to the daughter of the horſeleech, crying continually, *Give, give.* What the Prophet ſpeaks rhetorically of hell, *Iſa.* v. 14. is alſo true concerning this offspring of heaven in the ſoul, *it enlargeth itſelf, and openeth its mouth without meaſure.* The ſpirit of true godlineſs ſeems to be altogether ſuch that it cannot reſt in any meaſures of grace, or be fully contented with any of its attainments in this life; but ardently longs to receive the more plentiful communications of love, the more deep and legible impreſſions of grace, the more clear and ample experiences of divine aſſiſtance, the more ſenſible evidences of divine favour, the more pow-

erful and raviſhing illapſes and incomes of divine conſolation into itſelf; *let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth*, Cant. i. 2. Such is the ſpirit of true godlineſs, that the weakeſt that is endowed with it, longs to be as *David*, and the *Davids* to be as GOD, as the Angel of the LORD, according to that promiſe, *Zech.* xii. 8. The godly ſoul, that is in his right ſenſes, under the powerful apprehenſions of the lovelineſs of GOD, and the beauty of holineſs, cannot be content to live by any lower inſtance than that of *David*, whoſe ſoul even broke for the longing that it had unto the LORD, *Pſalm* cxix. 20. or that of the ſpouſe, who was even *ſick of love*, Cant. ii. 5. You have read of the mother of *Siſera* looking out at the window, waiting for his coming, and crying through the latteſs, *Why is his chariot ſo long in coming; why tarry the wheels of his chariot?* But this is not to be compared to the ἀποκαραδοκία, the earneſt expectation of the creature, the new creature, waiting for the manifeſtation of GOD; which the Apoſtle elegantly expreſſeth, and yet ſeems to labour for words, as if he could not ſufficiently expreſs it neither, *Rom.* viii. 19. You have read of the Iſraelites marching up towards the promiſed land, and murmuring that they were held ſo long in the wilderneſs: but the true Iſraelitiſh ſoul makes more haſte with leſs diſcontent, marches as under the conduct of the Angel of GOD's preſence, and longs to arrive at its reſt: but, alas! it is held in the wilderneſs too; and therefore cannot be fully quiet in itſelf, but

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ſends forth ſpies to view the land, the ſcouts of faith and hope, like *Caleb* and *Joſhua*, thoſe men of another ſpirit; and theſe go and walk through the holy land, and return home to the ſoul, and come back, not as *Noah*'s dove with an olive leaf in her mouth, but with ſome cluſters in their hands, they bring the ſoul a taſte of the good things of the kingdom, of the glories of her eternal ſtate: yea, the ſoul itſelf marches up to poſſeſs the land, goes out, with the ſpouſe in the *Canticles*, to meet the LORD, to ſeek him whom her ſoul loveth. Religion is a ſacred fire kept burning in the temple of the ſoul continually, which being once kindled from heaven, never goes out, but burns up heaven-wards, as the nature of fire is: this fire is kept alive in the ſoul to all eternity, though ſometimes, through the aſhes of earthly cares and concernments caſt into it, or the ſun of earthly proſperity ſhining upon it, it may ſometimes burn more dimly, and ſeem almoſt as if it were quite ſmothered: this fire is for ſacrifice too, though ſacrifice be not always offered upon it; the ſame fire of faith and love which offered up the morning ſacrifice is kept alive all the day long, and is ready to kindle the evening ſacrifice too, when the appointed time of it ſhall come. In this chariot of fire it is that the ſoul is continually carried out towards GOD, and accompliſheth a kind of ἀποθέωσις, or glorification daily; and when it finds itſelf firmly ſeated and ſwiftly carried herein, it no longer envies the tranſlation of *Elias*. The ſpirit of ſanctification is in

the ſoul as a burning fire ſhut up in the bones, which makes the ſoul weary with forbearing, and ſo powerful in longings that it cannot ſtay; as the ſpirit of prophecy is deſcribed, *Jer.* xx. It is more true of the Spirit of GOD than of the ſpirit of *Elihu*, the ſpirit within conſtraineth, and even preſſeth the ſoul, ſo that it is ready to ſwoon and faint away for very vehemence of longing. See the amorous ſpouſe falling into one of theſe fainting fits, *Cant.* ii. 5. and crying out mainly for ſome cordial from heaven to keep up her ſinking ſpirits, *Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am ſick of love.* O beautiful and bleſſed ſight, a ſoul working towards GOD, gaſping, and longing, and labouring after its proper happineſs and perfection! Well, the ſinking ſoul is relieved; CHRIST JESUS reacheth forth his left hand to her head, and his right hand embraceth her; and now ſhe recovers, her hanging hands lift up themſelves, and the beauties of her fading complection are reſtored; now ſhe ſits down *under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit is ſweet unto her taſte.* See here the faireſt ſight on this ſide heaven; a ſoul reſting, and glorying, and ſpreading itſelf in the arms of GOD, growing up in him, growing great in him, growing full in his fulneſs, and perfectly raviſhed with his pure love! O my ſoul, be not content to live by any lower inſtance? *Did not our hearts burn within us*, ſaid the two diſciples one to the other, *whilſt he talked with us?* But the ſoul in which the ſacred fire of love is powerfully kindled,

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doth not only burn towards GOD, whilſt he is more familiarly preſent with it, and, as it were, blows upon it; but if he ſeem to withdraw from it, it burns after him ſtill; *My beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone; I ſought him; I called him.* Cant. v. 6. And if the fire begin to languiſh, and ſeem as if it would go out, the holy ſoul is ſtartled preſently, and labours ἀναζωπυρεῖν, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Tim.* i. 6. to revive it, and blow it up again, calls upon itſelf to awake, to ariſe and purſue, to mend its pace, and to ſpeed its heavy and ſluggiſh motions. This divine active principle in the ſoul maintains a continual ſtriving, a holy ſtruggling and ſtretching forth of the ſoul towards GOD, a bold and ardent contention after the ſupreme good; μεγάλας ἔχει κινήσεις ἡ εὐσέβεια, religion hath the ſtrength of the divinity in it, its motions towards its object are quick and potent. That elegant deſcription which the Prophet makes of the wicked heart, with ſome change, may be brought livelily to expreſs this excellent temper of the godly ſoul; it is like the working ſea which cannot reſt: and although its waters do not caſt up mire and dirt, yet in a holy impatience, they riſe and ſwell, and work and mount towards heaven. In a word, that I may comprize many things in few expreſſions, no man ſo ambitious as the humble, none ſo covetous as the heavenly-minded, none ſo voluptuous as the ſelf-denying: religion gives a largeneſs and wideneſs to the ſoul, which ſin, and ſelf, and the world, had ſtrained and confined:

confined: but a ſaint's ambition is only to be great in GOD, his covetouſneſs is only to be filled with all the fulneſs of GOD, and his voluptuouſneſs is only to drink of the rivers of his pure pleaſures: he deſires to taſte the GOD whom he ſees, and to be ſatisfied with the GOD whom he taſtes. O now, how are all the faculties of the ſoul awakened to attendance upon the LORD of life! It hearkens for the ſound of his feet coming, the noiſe of his hands knocking at the door; it ſtands upon its watch-tower waiting for his appearing, waiting more earneſtly than they that watch for the morning, and rejoices to meet him at his coming; and having met him, runs into his arms, kiſſes him, holds him, and will not let him go, but brings him into the houſe, and entertains him in the gueſt-chamber: the ſoul complains that itſelf is not large enough, that there is not room enough to entertain ſo glorious a gueſt, no not though it have given him all the room that it hath: it entertains him with the wideſt arms, and the ſweeteſt ſmiles; and if he depart and withdraw, fetches him again with the deepeſt groans, Return, return, O Prince of Peace, and make me an everlaſting habitation of righteouſneſs unto thyſelf!

IT will not be amiſs here briefly to touch upon the reaſon of the godly ſoul's ſo ardent pantings after GOD. And here I might ſhew firſt, negatively, that it ſprings not from any carnal ambition of being better and higher than others, not from any carnal hope of impunity and ſafety, nor merely

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from the bitter ſenſe of preſſing and tormenting afflictions in this life. But I ſhall rather inſiſt upon it affirmatively. Theſe earneſt breathings after GOD ſpring from the feeling apprehenſions of ſelf-indigency and inſufficiency, and the powerful ſenſe of divine goodneſs and fulneſs; they are begotten of the divine bounty and ſelf-ſufficiency, manifeſting itſelf to the ſpirits of men, and conceived and brought forth by a deep ſenſe of ſelf-poverty; one might almoſt apply the Apoſtle's words to this purpoſe, 2 *Cor.* i. 9. *We receive the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in him.* I ſhall not diſcourſe upon theſe two heads disjunctly, but frame them into one notion, and ſo you may take it thus; theſe holy longings of the godly ſoul after GOD, ariſe from the ſenſe of its diſtance from GOD. To be ſo far diſtant from GOD who is life and love itſelf, and the proper and full happineſs of the ſoul, is grievous to the ſoul that is rightly affected towards him: and hence it is that the ſoul cannot be at reſt, but ſtill longs to be more intimately joined to him, and more perfectly filled with him: and the clearer the ſoul's apprehenſions are of its object, and the deeper its ſenſe is of its own unlikeneſs to him, and diſtance from him, the more ſtrong and impatient are its breathings; inſomuch that not only fear, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, but even love itſelf ſometimes ſeems to itſelf to have a kind of agony and torment in itſelf; which made the ſpouſe cry ſhe was ſick of love, that is, ſick of every thing that kept her from her

her love, ſick of that diſtance at which ſhe ſtood from her beloved LORD. The godly ſoul being raviſhed with the infinite ſweetneſs and goodneſs of GOD, longs to be that rather than what itſelf is, and beholding how it is eſtranged from him, by many ſenſual loves, ſelfiſh paſſions, corporal clogs, and diſtractions, bewails its diſtance, and cries out within itſelf, *O when ſhall I come and appear before God!* O when will GOD come and appear glorioufly to me and in me! *Who will deliver me from this body of death!* O that mortality were ſwallowed up of life! *David's* ſoul did wait for GOD as earneſtly, and more properly than they that watch for the morning; they may be ſaid rather to be weary of the long, and cold, and troubleſome night, than properly covetous of the day; but he, out of a pure and ſpiritual ſenſe of his eſtrangement from GOD, longs to appear before him, and be wrapped up in him. Heal the godly man of all his afflictions, grievances, and adverſities in the world, that he may have nothing to trouble him, nor put him to pain, yet he is not quiet, he is in pain becauſe of the diſtance whereat he ſtands from GOD: give him the whole world, and all the glory of it, yet he has not enough; he ſtill cries, and craves, *Give, give*, becauſe he is not entirely ſwallowed up in GOD: he openeth his mouth wide, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, and all the ſilver, and gold, peace, health, liberty, preferment, that you caſt into it, cannot fill it; becauſe they are not GOD, he cannot look upon them as his

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chiefeſt good. In a word, a godly man doth not ſo much ſay, in the ſenſe either of ſin or affliction, *O that one would give me the wings of a dove, that I might fly away, and be at reſt!* as in the ſenſe of his diſſimilitude to, and diſtance from GOD, O that one would give me the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away towards heaven!

CHAP. V.

An expoſtulation with Chriſtians concerning their remiſs and ſluggiſh temper: an eſſay to convince them of it by ſome conſiderations; which are, 1. *The activity of worldly men.* 2. *The reſtleſs appetites of the body.* 3. *The ſtrong propenſions of every creature towards its own centre. An inquiry into the ſlothfulneſs and inactivity of Chriſtian ſouls: two things premiſed, and ſo an anſwer is given to the inquiry in five particulars. The grace of faith is vindicated from the ſlander of being merely paſſive. A ſhort eſſay to awaken Chriſtians unto a greater vigour and activity.*

WE have ſeen in what reſpects religion is an active principle in the ſoul where it is ſeated: give me leave to enlarge a little here for conviction or reprehenſion. By this property of true religion we ſhall be able to diſcover much that is falſe and counterfeit in the world. If religion be no lazy, languid, ſluggiſh, paſſive thing, but life, love, the ſpirit of power and freedom, a fire burning,

burning, a well of water ſpringing up, as we have ſufficiently ſeen, what ſhall we ſay then of that heavy, ſluggiſh, ſpiritleſs kind of religion that moſt men take up with? Shall we call it a ſpirit of life, with the Apoſtle; and yet allow of a religion that is cold and dead? Shall we call it a ſpirit of love and power, with the ſame Apoſtle; and yet allow of it, though it be indifferent, low, and impotent? or will ſuch paſs for current with the wiſe and holy GOD, if we ſhould paſs a favourable cenſure upon it? And why ſhould it ever paſs with men, if it will not for ever paſs with GOD? But, indeed, how can this inactivity and ſluggiſhneſs paſs for religion amongſt men? Who can think you are in purſuit of the infinite and ſupreme good, that ſees you ſo ſlow in your motions towards it? Who can think that your treaſure is in heaven, that ſees your heart ſo far from thence? The more any thing partakes of GOD, and the nearer it comes to him who is the fountain of life, and power, and virtue, the more active, powerful, and lively will it be. We read of an atheiſtical generation in *Zeph.* i. 12. who fancied to themſelves an idle and ſlothful GOD, that minded not the affairs of the world at all, ſaying, *The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil*; which was alſo the falſe and groſs conceit of many of the heathen, as *Cicero* confeſſes of ſome of the Philoſophers themſelves, *Qui Deum nihil habere negatii dicunt & nihil exhibere alteri:* and indeed, though it be not ſo blaſphemous, yet it is almoſt as abſurd, to fancy an idle ſaint, as

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an idle deity. Sure I am, if it be not altogether impoſſible, yet it is altogether a ſhameful and deformed ſight, a holy ſoul in a lethargy, a godly ſoul that is not in purſuit of GOD. *Moſes* indeed bids *Iſrael ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord*; but there is no ſuch divinity in the holy ſcriptures as this, ſtand ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of the ſoul, though ſome have violently preſſed thoſe words, *Exod.* xiv. 13. to ſerve under their ſlothful ſtandard: no, no, the ſcripture ſpeaks to us at another rate, *Phil.* ii. 12. κατεργάζεσθε, *work out your own ſalvation*: and indeed the Spirit of GOD doth every where deſcribe religion by the activity, induſtry, vigour, and quickneſs of it, as I hinted in the very beginning of this diſcourſe, and could abundantly confirm and explain, if there were need of it.

BUT that I may more powerfully convince and awaken the lazy and heavy ſpirit and temper of many profeſſors, I will briefly touch upon a few particulars, which I will next propound to their ſerious conſideration.

1. THE children of this world, earthly and ſenſual men, are not ſo ſlothful, ſo lazy, ſo indifferent in the purſuit of earthly and ſenſual objects. You ſay you have laid up your treaſure in heaven; we know they have laid up their treaſure in the earth; now, who is it that behaves himſelf moſt ſuitably and ſeemly towards his treaſure? you or they? You ſay you have a treaſure in heaven, and are content to be able to ſay ſo, but make no haſte to

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be fully and feelingly possessed of it, to enjoy the benefit and sweetness of it. But they *rise up early and sit up late*, and either pine themselves, or eat the bread of sorrow, to obtain earthly and perishing inheritances; they circuit the world, travel far, sell all to purchase that part which is of so great price with them: and when they have accomplished it, O how do they set their heart upon it, bind up their very souls in the same bags with their money, and seal up their affections together with it: yea, and so they are not at rest neither, but find a gnawing hunger upon their hearts after more still, to add house to house, and land to land, and one bag to another; the covetous miser is ready to sit down and wring his hands, because he hath no more hands to scrape with; the voluptuous Epicure is angry that he hath not the neck of a crane the better to taste his dainties; and ambitious *Alexander*, when he domineers over the known world, is ready to sit down and whine, because there are no more worlds to conquer. What Christian can choose but be ashamed of himself, when he reads the description which *Plautus* the comedian gives of a covetous worldling, under the character of *Euclio*, how he hid his pot of gold, heeded it, watched it, visited it almost every hour, would not go from it in the day, could not sleep for it in the night, suspected every body that so much as looked towards it, and by all means kept it even as his life? For where is the like eager and ardent disposition to be found in a Christian towards God himself?

himself? Tell me, is it possible for a man that vehemently loves a virgin, to be content all his life long to court her at a distance, and not care whether ever he do actually enjoy her or no? or must not such an one necessarily pursue a matrimonial and most intimate union with her? Let us now confess the truth, and every one judge himself.

2. This dull and earthly body is not so indifferently affected towards meat and drink, and rest, and the things that do serve its necessities, and gratify its temper. Hunger will break down stone walls, and thirst will give away a kingdom for a cup of water; sickness will not be eased by good words, nor will a drowsy brain be bribed by any entertainments of company or recreation: no, no, the necessities of the body must and will be relieved with food, and physic, and sleep; the restless and raging appetite will never cease calling and crying to the soul for supplies till it arise and give them. Behold, O my soul! consider the mighty and incessant appetites and tendencies of the body after sensual objects, after its suitable good and proper perfection, and be ashamed of thy more remiss and sluggish inclinations towards the highest good, a god-like perfection!

3. No creature in the whole world is so languid, slow, and indifferent in its motions towards its proper rest and centre. How easy were it to call heaven and earth to witness the free, pleasant, chearful, eager addresses of every creature according

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ing to its kind, towards its own centre and happiness? The sun in the firmament rejoices to run its race, and will not stand still one moment, except it be miraculously overpowered by the command of GOD himself; the rivers seem to be in pain, till by a continued flowing they have accomplished to themselves a kind of perfection, and be swallowed up in the bosom of the ocean, except they be benumbed with cold, or otherwise overmastered and retarded by foreign violence; I need not instance in sensitives and vegetatives; all which you know with a natural vigour and activity grow up daily towards a perfect state and stature. Were it not a strange and monstrous sight to see a stone settling in the air, and not working towards its centre? Such a spectacle is a godly soul settling upon earth, and not endeavouring a nearer and more intimate union with its GOD. Wherefore, Christians, either cease to pretend that you have chosen GOD for your portion, centre, happiness, or else arise and cease not to pursue and accomplish the closest union and the most familiar conjunction with him that your souls are capable of: otherwise I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: and the day is coming, when you will be put to shame by the whole creation. Doth every, even the meanest creature of GOD, pursue its end and perfection, and proper happiness, with ardent and vehement longings; and shall a soul, the noblest of all creatures, stand folding up itself in itself, or choking up its wide and divine capacity with

with duſt and dirt? Shall a godly ſoul, the nobleſt of all ſouls, hang the wings, ſuſpend its motions towards the ſupreme good, or ſo much as once offer to faint and languiſh in its enterpriſes for eternal life? Tell it not at *Athens*, publiſh it not at *Rome*, leſt the heathen Philoſophers deride and hiſs us out of the world.

BUT you will aſk me, When a Chriſtian may be ſaid to be ſluggiſh and unactive? and who theſe lazy ſouls are? I will premiſe two things, and then give you a brief account of them. 1*ſt*, When I ſpeak of a ſluggiſh and ſpiritleſs religion, I do not ſpeak as the hot-ſpirited *Anabaptiſts* or *Chiliaſts*, who being themſelves acted by a ſtrange fervour of mind, miſcalled zeal, are wont to declaim againſt all men as cold and benumbed in their ſpirits, who do not call for fire from heaven to conſume all Diſſenters, under the notion of Antichriſtian; who are not afraid to reproach the divine, holy, gentle, yet generous ſpirit of religion; calling it weak, womaniſh, cowardly, low, cold, and I know not what. Theſe men, I believe, ſo far as I can gueſs at their ſpirit, if they had lived in the days of our SAVIOUR, and had beheld that gentle, meek, humble, peaceable, and pacate ſpirit, which did infinitely ſhine forth in him, would have gone nigh to have reproved him for not carrying on his own kingdom with ſufficient vigour and activity; if not have judged CHRIST himſelf to be much Antichriſtian. I hope you ſee nothing in all my diſcoveries of the active ſpirit of religion that ſavours of

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ſuch a fiery ſpirit as this is. 2*dly*, When I do ſo highly commend the active ſpirit of true religion, and the vigorous temper of truly religious ſouls, I would not be underſtood as if I thought all ſuch ſouls were alike ſwift, or that any ſuch ſoul did always move with like ſwiftneſs, and keep a like pace towards GOD. I know that there are different ſizes of active ſouls, yea, and different degrees of activity in the ſame ſoul, as may be ſeen, *Cant.* v. 3. compared with the ſixth verſe of the ſame chapter, and in many other places of ſcripture.

BUT yet, that none may flatter and deceive themſelves with an opinion of their being what indeed they are not, I will briefly diſcover the ſluggiſhneſs and inactivity of Chriſtians in a few particulars. I pray take it not ill though the greateſt part of Chriſtians be found guilty; for that is no other than what CHRIST himſelf hath propheſied.

1. THE active ſpirit of religion in the ſoul will not ſuffer men to take up their reſt in a conſtant courſe of external performances; and they are but ſlothful ſouls that place their religion in any thing without them. By external performances I mean not only open, and public, and ſolemn ſervices, but even the moſt private, and ſecret performances that are in and by the body, and, *ab extra*, to the ſoul. It is not poſſible that a ſoul ſhould be happy in any thing that is extrinſical to itſelf, no not in GOD himſelf, if we conſider him only as ſomething without the ſoul: the Devil himſelf knows and ſees much of GOD without him; but, having

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no communications of a divine nature or life, being perfectly estranged from the life of GOD, he remains perfectly miserable. I doubt it is a common deceit in the world, men toil and labour in bodily acts of worship and religion in a slavish and mercenary manner, and think, with those labourers in the parable, that at the end they must needs receive great wages, and much thanks, because they have borne the heat and burden of the day. Alas, that ever men should so grossly mistake the nature of religion, as to sink it into a few bodily acts and carcase-services, and to think it is nothing else but a running the round of duties and ordinances, and a keeping up a constant set and course of actions! I know indeed that men will be loth to confess that they place their religion in any thing without them; but, I pray, consider seriously wherein you excel other men, save only in praying or hearing now and then, or some other outward acts, and judge yourselves by your nature, and not by your actions.

2. THE active spirit of religion, where it is in the soul, will not suffer men to take up their rest in a mere pardon of sin; and they are but slothful souls that could be so satisfied. Blessed is the man indeed whose iniquities are pardoned, *Psalm* xxxii. 1, 2. But if we could suppose a soul to be acquitted of the guilt of all sin, and yet to lie bound under the dominion of lusts and passions, and to live without GOD in the world, it were yet far from true blessedness. A real hell and misery will arise

ariſe out of the very bowels of ſin and wickedneſs, though there ſhould be no reſerve of fire and brimſtone in the world to come. It is utterly impoſſible that a ſoul ſhould be happy out of GOD, tho' it had the greateſt ſecurity imaginable that it ſhould never ſuffer any thing from him. The higheſt care and ambition indeed of a ſlaviſh and mercenary ſpirit is to be ſecured from the wrath and vengeance of GOD, but the breathings of the ingenuous and holy ſoul are after a divine life, and godlike perfections. This right gracious temper you may ſee in *David*, Pſalm li. 9, 10, 11, 12. which is alſo the temper of every truly religious ſoul.

3. THE active ſpirit of religion, where it is in the ſoul, will not ſuffer men to take up their reſt in mere innocency, and freedom from ſin; and they are ſlothful ſouls that could count it happineſs enough to be harmleſs. I doubt men are much miſtaken about holineſs; it is more than mere innocency, or freedom from the guilt or power of ſin, it is not a negative thing; there is ſomething active, noble, divine, and powerful, in true religion. A ſoul that rightly underſtands its own penury and ſelf-inſufficiency, and the emptineſs and meanneſs of all creature-good, cannot poſſibly take up its reſt, or place its happineſs in any thing but in a real participation of GOD himſelf; and therefore is continually making out towards that GOD from whom it came, and is labouring to unite itſelf more and more unto him. Let a low-ſpirited, fleſhly-minded Phariſee take up with a negative holineſs

holineſs and happineſs, as he doth, *Luke* xviii. 11. *God, I thank thee that I am not* ſo and ſo: a noble and high-ſpirited Chriſtian cannot take up his reſt in any negation or freedom from ſin. Every godly ſoul is not ſo learned, indeed, as to be able to deſcribe the nature and proper perfection of a ſoul, and to tell you how the happineſs of a ſoul conſiſts, not *in quiete*, but *in actu & vigore*, not in ceſſation and reſt, as the happineſs of a ſtone doth, but in life, and power, and vigour, as the happineſs of GOD himſelf doth: but yet the ſpirit of true religion is ſo excellent and powerful in every godly ſoul, that it is ſtill carrying it to the fuller enjoyment of an higher good: and the ſoul doth find and feel within itſelf, though it cannot diſcourſe philoſophically of theſe things, that, though it were free from all diſturbance of ſin and affliction in the world, yet ſtill it wants ſome ſupreme and poſſible good to make it completely happy, and ſo bends all its power thitherward. This is the deſcription which you will every where find made in ſcripture of the true ſpirit of holineſs, which hath always ſomething poſitive and divine in it, as *Iſa.* i. 16, 17. *Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well*; and *Eph.* iv. 22, 24. *Put off the old man, put on that new man which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* And accordingly a truly godly perſon, to uſe the Apoſtle's words, though he know nothing by himſelf, yet doth not thereby count himſelf happy.

4. THE active ſpirit of true religion, where it is in the ſoul, will not ſuffer men to take up their reſt in ſome meaſures of grace received; and ſo far as the ſoul doth ſo, it is ſluggiſh and leſs active than it ought to be. This, indeed, oftentimes comes to paſs when the ſoul is under ſome diſtemper of proud ſelfiſhneſs, earthly-mindedneſs, or the like, or is leſs apprehenſive of its object and happineſs; as it ſeems to have been the caſe of the ſpouſe, *Cant.* v. 3. Some ſuch fainting fits, languiſhings, ſurfeitings, inſenſibleneſs, muſt be allowed to be in the godly ſoul during its impriſoned and imperfect ſtate: but we muſt not judge ourſelves by any preſent diſtempers, or infirmities. The nature of religion, when it acts the ſoul rightly and powerfully, is to carry it after a more lively reſemblance of GOD, which is the moſt proper and excellent enjoyment of him. A mind rightly and actually ſound is moſt ſick of love; and the nature of love is, not to know when it is near enough to its object, but ſtill to long after the moſt perfect conjunction with it. This well of water, if it be not violently obſtructed for a time, is ever ſpringing up till it be ſwallowed up in the ocean of divine love and grace. The ſoul that is rightly acquainted with itſelf and its GOD, ſees ſomething ſtill wanting in itſelf, and to be enjoyed in him, which makes it that it cannot be at reſt, but is ſtill ſpringing up into him, till it come to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of its LORD. In this holy, loving, longing, ſtriving, active temper, we find

find the great Apoſtle, *Phil.* iii. 12, 13, 14. And by how much the more of divine grace any ſoul hath drunk in, the more thirſty is it after much more.

5. THE active ſpirit of true religion, where it is powerfully ſeated in the minds of men, will not ſuffer them to ſettle into a love of this animal life, nor indeed ſuffer them to be content to live for ever in ſuch a kind of body as this; and that ſoul is in a degree lazy and ſlothful, that doth not deſire to depart and be with his LORD. The godly ſoul eying GOD as its perfect and full happineſs, and finding that its being in the body doth ſeparate it from GOD, keeps it in a poor and imperfect ſtate, and hinders its bliſsful communion with the higheſt good, groans within itſelf that mortality were ſwallowed up of life, with the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* v. 4. I know not how much, but I think he hath not very much of GOD, neither ſight of him nor love of him, that could be content to abide for ever in this imperfect, mixed, low ſtate, and never be perfected in the full enjoyment of him. And it ſeems that they in whom the love of GOD is rightly predominant, potent, and flouriſhing, do alſo look earneſtly *for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life*, Jude 21. without doubt they ought to do. 2 *Pet.* iii. 12. *What manner of perſons ought ye to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs, looking for and haſting unto the coming of the day of God?* Let this ſuffice by way of general reprehenſion.

2. MORE particularly, the conſideration of the active nature of true religion may well ſerve to correct a miſtake about that noble grace of faith. How diſhonourable do ſome ſpeak of this excellent and powerful grace, when they make it to be a ſlothful, paſſive thing, an idle kind of waiting, or a melancholic ſitting ſtill; which, indeed and in truth, is life and power. Be not miſtaken in ſo high and eminent a grace: true faith doth not only accept the imputed righteouſneſs of CHRIST for juſtification, but by a lively dependence upon GOD drinks in divine influences, and eagerly ſucks in grace, and virtue, and life, from the fountain of grace, for its more perfect ſanctification: and for this cauſe, I think, a purifying virtue is aſcribed to it, *Acts* xv. 9. Faith is not a lazy languid thing, content to wait for ſalvation till the world to come; but it is even now gaſping after it, and accompliſhing it too in a way of mortification, ſelf-denial, and growing up in GOD: it is not content to be a candidate waiting for life and happineſs, but is actually drawing down heaven into the heart, attracting GOD to itſelf, and ſucking in participations of divine grace and image into the ſoul: its motto is that of the famous painter, *Nullâ dies ſine lineâ*; it longs to find ſome divine lineament, ſome line of GOD's image drawn upon the ſoul daily. Faith is a giving grace, as well as receiving; it gives up the whole ſoul to GOD, and is troubled that it can give him no more: it binds over the ſoul afreſh to GOD every day, and is troubled that it can bind it

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no faſter nor cloſer to him. The believing ſoul is wearied becauſe of murderers, murdering loves, luſts, cares, earthly pleaſures, and calls mightily upon CHRIST to come and take vengeance upon them: it is wearied becauſe of thoſe robbers that are daily ſtealing away precious time and affections from GOD, which are due unto him, and calls upon CHRIST to come and ſcourge theſe thieves, theſe buyers and ſellers, out of his own temple. In a word, the godly ſoul is active, and faith is the very life and action of the ſoul itſelf.

Laſtly, LET me exhort all Chriſtians from hence to be zealous, to be fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the LORD, and longing after him; *ſtir up the grace of God that is in you*; *quench not*, i. e. blow up, enflame the Spirit of GOD in you. Awake, Chriſtian ſoul, out of thy lethargy, and rejoice, as the ſun, to run the race that is ſet before thee, and, as a mighty man refreſhed with wine, to fight thy ſpiritual battles againſt the armies of uncircumciſed, profane, and earthly concupiſcences, loves, and paſſions. Eye GOD as your centre, the enjoyment of him as the happineſs, and full conformity to him as the perfection of your ſouls; and then ſay, Awake, ariſe, O my ſoul, and hide not thy hand in thy boſom, but throw thyſelf into the very heart and boſom of GOD; lay hold upon eternal life. Again, Obſerve how all things in the world purſue their ſeveral perfections with unwearied and impatient longings, and ſay, Come, my ſoul, and do thou likewiſe. Converſe not with GOD ſo

much under the notion of a Law-giver, but as with love itſelf; nor with his commands, as having authority in them, but as having goodneſs, and life, and ſweetneſs in them. Again, Conſider your poverty as creatures, and how utterly impoſſible it is for you to be happy in yourſelves, and ſay, Ariſe, O my ſoul, from off this weak and tottering foundation, and build thyſelf up in GOD; ceaſe pinching thyſelf within the ſtraits of ſelf-ſufficiencies, and come ſtretch thyſelf upon infinite goodneſs and fulneſs. Again, Pore not upon your attainments; do not ſit brooding upon your preſent accompliſhments, but forget the things that are behind, and ſay, Awake, O my ſoul, there is yet infinitely much more in GOD; purſue after him for it, till thou have gotten as much as a created being is capable to receive of the divine nature. In a word, take heed you live not by the loweſt examples, (which thing keeps many in a dwindling ſtate all their days) but by the higheſt: read over the ſpouſe her temper, ſick of love; *David*'s temper, waiting for GOD more than they that watch for the morning, breaking in heart for the longing that he had to the LORD, and ſay, Ariſe, O my ſoul, and live as high as the higheſt. It is no fault to deſire to be as good, as holy, as happy as an angel of GOD; and thus, O my ſoul, open thy mouth wide, and GOD hath promiſed to fill thee!

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

That religion is a laſting and perſevering principle in the ſouls of men, proved by ſeveral ſcriptures. The grounds of this perſeverance aſſigned; firſt, negatively, it doth not ariſe from the abſolute inamiſſability of grace in the creature, nor from the ſtrength of man's free-will. Secondly, affirmatively, the grace of election cannot fail. The grace of juſtification is neither ſuſpended nor violated: the covenant of grace is everlaſting: the Mediator of this covenant lives for ever: the promiſes of it immutable. An objection anſwered concerning a regenerate man's willing his own apoſtaſy. An objection anſwered, drawn from the falls of ſaints in ſcripture; as alſo from thoſe ſcriptures that ſeem to imply a man's falling away. A diſcovery of counterfeit religion, and the ſhameful apoſtaſy of falſe profeſſors. An encouragement to all holy diligence, from the conſideration of this doctrine; the rather that we may ſtop the mouths of thoſe that falſly affirm that the ſame is prejudicial to true godlineſs.

I Come now to the third property of true religion contained in theſe words, and that is the *perſeverance* of it. And here the foundation of my following diſcourſe ſhall be this propoſition. "True "religion is a laſting and perſevering principle in "the ſouls of good men."

It is ſaid of the hypocritical *Jews*, that their goodneſs was as the *early dew that ſoon paſſes away*, Hoſea vi. 4. But that principle of goodneſs which God gives to the ſouls of his people is compared to *a well of water*, evermore ſending forth freſh ſtreams, and inceſſantly ſpringing up towards God himſelf. Our Saviour compares hypocritical profeſſors to *ſeed ſown upon ſtony ground*, that ſprings up indeed, but ſoon withers away, *Mark* iv. 5, 6. but this well of water, which is in the ſincere godly ſoul, ſprings up into everlaſting life; it ſprings and is never dried up; *it is a ſpring of water, whoſe waters fail not*, or *lie not*, as it is expreſſed by the Prophet, *Iſa.* lviii. 11. or if you look upon it under the metaphor of oil, as it is ſometimes expreſſed in ſcripture, then it is truly that oil that faileth not, whereof the widow of *Sarepta*'s cruiſe of oil was but a ſcant reſemblance. Amongſt other texts which the learned Dr *Arrowſmith* brings to prove the infallibility of the perſeverance of ſaints, this ſpeech of our Saviour's which is the ſubject of my whole diſcourſe, is one; who alſo quoteth *Theophylact* for the ſame mind, *viz.* the perſeverance of this principle, yea, and ſomewhat more, even the growth and multiplication of it. To the ſame purpoſe the ſame excellent author quoteth *John* x. 27, 28. *My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any man pluck them out of my hand.* In which words our Saviour ſtrongly aſſerteth the certain glorification of his elect,

elect, by uſing a verb of the preſent tenſe, *I give unto them eternal life*; he will as certainly give it them, as if they had it already; except the words do imply that they have it already, *viz.* the beginnings of it, even in this life: and if ſo, then the words do yet more ſtrongly aſſert the doctrine of perſeverance; for how can that life be called eternal, which may be ended? In the ſame words he ſeemeth purpoſely to prevent fears, and beforehand to anſwer objections, by ſecuring them both from internal and external enemies; they ſhall never periſh, *viz.* of their own accord, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand; for the word in the original is ſuch as doth ſecure them from the power of devils as well as men; and what is ſaid of the church in general, is alſo certain concerning every true member of it in particular; *the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*. CHRIST hath not only choſen and ordained his people that they ſhould be holy, but alſo that they ſhould perſevere in holineſs; not only that they ſhould bring forth good fruits, but that their *fruits ſhould remain*, John xv. 15, 16. Hence they are ſaid to be born again of incorruptible ſeed, which liveth and abideth *for ever*, 1 Pet. i. 23. And he that is born of GOD, is ſaid to have the ſeed of GOD in him, and remaining in him, and ſo remaining in him as that he ſhall never again commit ſin, that is, ſhall not become any more ungodly, 1 *John* iii. 9. To all which may be added that ſtrong and ſtrengthning text, *Rom.* viii. 38, 39. *I am perſuaded that neither*

death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord: which one text doth excellently aſſert both thoſe high and comfortable doctrines of aſſurance and perſeverance; and they are worthily to be honoured in the church of GOD, who have vindicated it from the corrupt gloſſes and cavils of the Papiſts, who have endeavoured to rob Chriſtians of the ſweetneſs which may be ſucked out of that pregnant honey-comb: in a word, let the holy Pſalmiſt's experience of the ſupporting virtue of this doctrine ſhut up the proof of it at preſent, who found himſelf wonderfully comforted by it after all his fears and foils, *Pſalm* lxxiii. 24. where he ſings of the loving-kindneſs of the LORD in time paſt; *Thou haſt holden me by my right-hand*; and, at preſent, *I am continually with thee*; that is, thou art continually with me; and, with the like courage and confidence, he ſpeaks of all time to come, *Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to glory.* Now, although the doctrine of the perſeverance of ſaints be thus fully and clearly laid down in ſcripture, yet it is eaſy to err in giving an account of it, and of the grounds of it. And therefore I ſhall proceed to the grounds of it, which I will briefly lay down negatively and affirmatively. Firſt negatively.

1. THE certain perſeverance of the ſaints in a ſtate of grace doth not ariſe from the abſolute inamiſſability

amiſſability of grace in the creature: it is one thing to affirm, that grace ſhall not be loſt, and another thing to affirm, that it is abſolutely unloſeable. GOD hath told us, that the world ſhall no more be drowned, but who will ſay for all that that it is not in itſelf capable of drowning? whilſt we think to honour GOD by aſſerting the permanency of grace, we muſt take heed leſt we make a god of grace, and ſo diſhonour him. Grace, as it is in GOD, in the fountain, which divines ſometimes call active grace, is eternal and unchangeable, not ſubject to any defection or alteration. There is no time, or place, or caſe, wherein the love and goodneſs of GOD fail towards his elect. They are one and the ſame in GOD towards his people, even when they are under the greateſt deſertions, and have no ſenſe at all of them; we muſt not ſay the ſun is grown dark, as often as a dark cloud interpoſeth between it and our ſight. Yea, however it be moſt certain that the pure and holy GOD hateth ſin even in his elect, yet it is alſo certain that the good and gracious GOD loveth the perſons of his ſaints, even at what time they ſin: "For the love "of GOD towards the regenerate, ſaith *Davenant*, "is not bottomed upon their perfect purity and "holineſs, but upon CHRIST JESUS the Media-"tor, who hath transferred their ſins upon him-"ſelf, and ſo hath redeemed them from the wrath "of GOD." The love and kindneſs of GOD towards his people is abſolutely unchangeable and everlaſting. But grace in the creature, itſelf being

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ing a creature, is not ſimply and abſolutely unchangeable or unloſeable: there is a poſſibility of loſing inherent grace, if it be conſidered in itſelf; yea, and it would actually be loſt and periſh, but that GOD upholdeth his people with one hand, whilſt he exerciſeth them with the other. Tho' with all my might I deſire to maintain the perſeverance of the ſaints, yet I dare not, as the manner of ſome is, ground it upon the firmneſs and rootedneſs of faith in man, but upon the goodneſs and faithfulneſs of GOD, which are ſuch towards his elect, that he will keep them by his mighty power *through faith unto ſalvation*, as the Apoſtle expreſſeth it, 1 *Peter* i. 5.

2. IT doth not ariſe from the ſtrength of man's free-will, as if he were of himſelf able to keep himſelf for ever in a ſtate of grace, when GOD had once put him into it. The ſaints indeed ſhall for ever will their own perſeverance, as we ſhall ſee anon, but it is GOD that worketh in them even this will, *Phil.* ii. 13. Man's own free-will, or ſelf-ſufficiency, is ſo far from being the ground of his perſeverance in grace and holineſs, that I do believe nothing in the world is more directly contrary to grace than habitual and predominant ſelf-confidence; and, even in the ſaints themſelves, there is nothing that doth ſtrike a greater ſtroke towards their apoſtaſy, than this ſelf-conceit and confidence of their own ſtrength, as ſomething diſtinct from GOD, though the ſame be not habitual and predominant; for they themſelves are many times

times ſadly weakened and ſet back by that means, and ſuffer many lamentable ſpiritual decays. This ſeems to have ſometimes been the caſe of *Hezekiah* and of *David* too, and had like to have been the caſe of *Paul*, when he had ſo much abounded in revelations, 2 *Cor.* xii. 7. Sure it is, that nothing doth more eſtrange the hearts of GOD's people from him, nor bind up the influences of divine grace and favour from them, than this ſecurity, confidence in the ſtrength of their own wills, and vain opinion of ſelf-ſufficiency, which thing the ſad experience of holy Chriſtians doth atteſt: not only the Apoſtles *James* and *Peter*, but indeed all the true diſciples of CHRIST in the world do agree to that proverb, GOD *reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* In a word, though *to do juſtly*, and *to love mercy*, have indeed much of religion in them, yet unto perſeverance it is alſo required that a man deny himſelf and the ſufficiency of his own free-will; and, in the Prophet's expreſſion, *Walk humbly with his God.* You know whoſe brag it was, *Though all men ſhall be offended becauſe of thee, yet will I never be offended*; and again, *Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*; and what was the lamentable conſequence of this ſelf-confidence, you know likewiſe: wherefore *let him that ſtandeth* by his own ſtrength, *take heed leſt he fall.*

I proceed now to ſpeak ſomething affirmatively concerning the grounds of the ſaints perſeverance in a ſtate of grace. I have already ſhewed you that

that active grace is abſolutely of an immutable nature; and although paſſive grace be not ſo, yet it ſhall not be loſt totally and finally. For,

1. THE grace of election cannot fail. When I think of that uncertain, conditional, mutable decree of ſaving men, which ſome aſcribe to GOD, who is infinite and eternal wiſdom and oneneſs, methinks I may, with great reaſon, apply the Apoſtle's words ſpoken concerning himſelf and ſay, when GOD is thus graciouſly minded to elect his people to eternal life, *Doth he uſe lightneſs, or the things that he purpoſeth, doth he purpoſe according to the fleſh*, after the manner of men, who are unſteady and wavering in their determinations? Is there with him yea, yea, and nay, nay? What doth the Apoſtle mean by thoſe words, 2 *Tim.* ii. 19. *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his?* The Apoſtle, in the foregoing verſe, having related the apoſtaſy of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, and the overthrow of ſome mens faith by their means, immediately ſubjoins this comfortable doctrine of the ſtedfaſtneſs and firmneſs of GOD's decree of election, to prevent the offence which the ſaints might take againſt the falls of others, and to relieve them againſt the fears that they might poſſibly conceive concerning their own perſeverance; *q. d.* let no one be offended, as if the ſalvation of the elect ſtood at uncertainties; it appears that theſe men were none of GOD's elect, becauſe they are ſeduced, and the faith that they had is overthrown; and

and as for your part who are elected, fear not leſt ye alſo ſhould apoſtatiſe, it is not poſſible to deceive the elect in the neceſſary and fundamental truths of the goſpel, *Matt.* xxiv. 24. fear not leſt ye alſo ſhould be drawn away by the error of the wicked unto perdition, *for the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, &c.* In which ſentence, ſays Dr *Arrowſmith*, almoſt every word breathes firmneſs and performance: nothing is more firm in a building than the foundation; that you may not doubt of that, it is alſo called ſure, or ſteady; this ſure foundation is ſaid to ſtand, *i. e.* ſay the *Dutch* Annotations, abideth ſtedfaſt and certain; for it is the foundation not of man's laying but of GOD's, with whom there is *no variableneſs nor ſhadow of change*; yea, farther, this foundation is ſaid to be ſealed; now, what is accounted more firm and ſure than thoſe things which are ſealed with a ſeal? eſpecially ſuch a ſeal as this, *The Lord knoweth who are his*; though the wiſeſt of men are often deceived in their opinions, yet the knowledge of GOD is infinitely infallible, according to that of *Auſtin*, "If any of "the elect periſh, GOD is deceived; but GOD is "not deceived, therefore none of the elect can "periſh, for the LORD knoweth who are his." When *Samuel* indeed went to ſeparate one of the ſons of *Jeſſe* from the reſt of his brethren to be king over *Iſrael*, he firſt pitched upon *Eliab*, and afterwards rejected him, 1 *Sam.* xvi. but GOD is guilty of no ſuch inconſtancy in that eternal election which he makes of men to be kings and prieſts

unto

unto himſelf. Thoſe ſeveral acts of divine grace mentioned *Rom.* viii. 29, 30. though they be many links, yet run one into another, and all from firſt to laſt make up but one chain; concerning which divine and myſterious concatenation one may boldly uſe that peremptory prohibition which our LORD uſeth concerning a leſs indiſſoluble conjunction, *Matt.* xix. 6. *What God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder.*

2. THE grace of juſtification is neither ſuſpended nor violated; it admits neither of interciſion nor reſciſſion, neither of pauſe nor period. There is nothing between juſtification and glorification in the Apoſtle's ſentence, but the copulative *and*, Rom. viii. 30. There is nothing between a juſtified ſoul and glory, but a mere paſſage into it. We may be allowed to triumph with the holy Apoſtle in the forequoted chapter, Who ſhall bring an accuſation againſt GOD's elect? *It is God that juſtifieth.* But what though you be at preſent juſtified, may ſome ſay, is there not a poſſibility of being unjuſtified again, may not the righteouſneſs of the righteous be taken from him, may you not be condemned hereafter? But *who is he that ſhall condemn us? it is Chriſt that died:* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, the love of GOD towards his juſtified ones is not grounded upon their purity, lovelineſs, or perfection, but it is founded in their Redeemer, which Redeemer hath done enough, both to bring them into a juſtified ſtate, and to keep them in it for ever; it is CHRIST that died to free them from ſin,

ſin, it is CHRIST that is riſen again for their juſtification; *that is at the right hand of God*, to deliver them from all their enemies, that maketh interceſſion for them, for their perſeverance. GOD loves nothing but the communications of himſelf; ſo far as any thing partakes of the divine image, ſo far it partakes of divine favour and complacency; ſo that whilſt a good man bears a reſemblance unto GOD ſo long he ſhall be accepted of him, and embraced in the arms of his love; and that ſhall be for ever, as we ſhall ſee under the next head. Until you have blotted out all the image and ſuperſcription of GOD out of a godly ſoul, until you have raſed out all the ſtamps and impreſſions of goodneſs; in a word, until you have rendered him wicked and ungodly, you cannot abandon him from the embraces of GOD, which thing men and devils ſhall never be able to do, as I have partly ſhewed already, and ſhall yet ſhew more at large.

IT is true indeed that *Adam* fell from a juſt ſtate, though not from a juſtified ſtate; for that ſuppoſes ſin formerly committed. But this is no great wonder; for he had his righteouſneſs in himſelf, and his happineſs in his own keeping: but the condition of believers is now more ſafe and firm, as depending not upon any created power or will, but upon the infinite and effectual help and ſtrength of a Mediator, which will never fail.

3. THE covenant of grace is everlaſting. It hath pleaſed GOD to enter into a covenant of grace and peace with every believing ſoul; which, I ſuppoſe,

poſe, I need not go about to prove, all Chriſtians acknowledging it, though they do not all agree in one notion of it. Now this covenant, wherein GOD engages himſelf to be their GOD (for that is the ſummary contents of it on his part) is expreſsly called by the Apoſtle διαθήκη αἰώνιος, *the everlaſting covenant*, Heb. xiii. 20. And again, *Jer.* xxxii. 40. *I will make an everlaſting covenant with them:* which covenant, and the everlaſtingneſs of it, are fully explained in the following words, *I will not turn away from them to do them good:* the inviolable nature of this covenant is alſo expreſsly aſſerted in that famous paſſage, *Jer.* xxxi. 31, 32. *I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, which my covenant they brake:* as if he had ſaid, "I will "make a covenant that ſhall not be ſubject to "breaches. In the former covenant with their "fathers I gave them laws to keep, which they "kept not; but, in the new covenant, I will "give them alſo a heart to keep my laws:" it is not poſſible that covenant ſhould be broken, one principal part of which is an heart both able and willing to keep it. The ſimilitudes which GOD uſeth in the thirty fifth, thirty ſixth, and thirty ſeventh verſes of that ſame chapter, do alſo further confirm and illuſtrate this doctrine of the everlaſtingneſs of this covenant of grace.

UNDER this head let me glance at three things.

1. THE Mediator of this covenant lives for ever, and lives to make interceſſion for believers, *Heb.* vii.

vii. 25. and from this the Apoſtle argues, that they ſhall be ſaved to the uttermoſt, or evermore, as the margin reads it. From this alſo the Apoſtle argues the unchangeable ſtate of believers, as we obſerved before out of *Rom.* viii. 34. CHRIST JESUS is always heard and accepted of the FATHER in all the requeſts that he maketh to him, according to that in *John* xi. 41, 42. *Jeſus lift up his eyes and ſaid, Father, I thank thee, that thou haſt heard me, and I know that thou heareſt me always.* If theſe things be ſo, then the perſeverance of the ſaints is built upon a moſt certain bottom, is ſecured againſt the very gates of hell; for CHRIST hath prayed for them that they may be where he is, *John* xvii. 24. and, in the mean time, that they may be kept *from the evil*, ver. 15. and that their faith *fail not*, Luke xxii. 32.

2. THE promiſes of this covenant are immutable, *they are in Chriſt Jeſus yea and amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. as if one ſhould ſay in *Latin*, *Certo certiora*, perfectly ſure and certain. GOD, who is truth itſelf, will not, cannot be unto his people as a liar, or *as waters that fail*, as the Prophet's phraſe is. The infinite fountain of grace and truth cannot poſſibly become like one of the brooks which *Job* ſpeaks of, which ſeem to be full of water, and are ſo at a certain winter ſeaſon, but when the poor ſcorched *Arabian* comes to look for water thence in ſummer he goes away aſhamed, becauſe they are now vaniſhed, they are conſumed out of their place, *Job* vi. 19, 20. Now the promiſe is concerning

not

not only grace, but the final perſeverance of it: if he promiſe pardoning grace, it is in theſe full and ſatisfying expreſſions, *I will remember their ſin* (any one of their ſins) *no more*, Jer. xxxi. 34. If he promiſe purging and purifying grace, it is in the like amplitude of phraſe, *that they may fear me for ever*; and again, *they ſhall not depart from me*, Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. with many other places of like importance.

3. GOD is ſaid, 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. to dwell in the ſouls of his people, in oppoſition to a wavering man, *who turneth in to tarry for a night*, Jer. xiv. 8. GOD indeed hath promiſed, that it ſhall be ſaid to them that were not his people, *Ye are the ſons of the living God*, Hoſ. i. 10. but never on the contrary; he hath no where threatened them that are the ſons of the living GOD that it ſhall at any time be ſaid to them, *Ye are not my people.* True indeed, as to external profeſſion, church-memberſhip, mere covenant holineſs, and outward communion, GOD doth many times diſinherit and reject them that were ſo his people: but, as to true godlineſs, participation of the divine image, internal and ſpiritual communion, we may confidently ſay with the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. i. 9. *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; or, with the ſame Apoſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, 1 Theſſ. v. 24. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who will alſo do it:* Do what? why, that which he was ſpeaking of and praying for

for in *ver.* 23. viz. *Preſerve ſpirit, ſoul, and body, blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

I conclude then, that grace in the creature is a participation of him who is eſſential and perfect grace and goodneſs, a communication made by him of his holy nature, which becomes a living principle in the ſouls of men, a fountain ſending forth a continued ſtream of holy diſpoſitions and affections without interciſion or ceſſation: though theſe ſtreams run ſometimes higher, ſometimes lower, ſometimes ſwifter, ſometimes ſlower, yet they are never wholly dried up as the brooks of *Tema* were. For, where GOD hath once opened a fountain in the ſoul, he feeds it with freſh ſupplies from himſelf; as a fountain itſelf would dry up, if it were not nouriſhed by the ſupplies of ſubterraneous waters. The perſeverance of grace depends purely upon the ſupports and ſupplies of uncreated eſſential life and goodneſs. But how do we know that GOD will certainly afford theſe ſupplies? We build upon his goodneſs and love in CHRIST towards his elect, which is infinite and unſpeakable; and upon his faithfulneſs in accompliſhing his promiſe, *viz.* that he will never leave nor forſake them, *Heb.* xiii. 5. that he will keep them by his power unto ſalvation, 1 *Pet.* i. 5. They that are of the number of GOD's holy and choſen ones ſhall, no doubt, continue of that number according to that in 1 *John* ii. 19. They that are truly in CHRIST ſhall abide in him, 1 *John* ii. 27. The ſeed of GOD remaineth in the godly, and they cannot ſin, becauſe

becauſe they are born of GOD, 1 *John* iii. 9. *He that is begotten of God keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not*, 1 John v. 18. What can be more expreſs and ample than that conſolatory promiſe of our LORD made to his poor frail ſheep, *John* x. 28. *I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any one pluck them out of my hand.*

BUT ſome one may ſay perhaps, What if man will apoſtatiſe? what if the ſaints themſelves will forſake GOD? will he not then ſay of them, as the Apoſtle of the unbelieving huſband, *If they will depart, let them depart?* Will not GOD forſake them that forſake him?

Anſw. YES, GOD will forſake them that forſake him; but they never ſhall forſake him: they being rightly renewed after the image of GOD, and perfectly overpowered by his grace, ſhall never will any ſuch departure: *I will betroth thee unto me for ever*, Hoſea ii. 19. "It is certain, ſaith Dr "*Arrowſmith*, that GOD will condemn all impe- "nitent ſinners; but it is as certain that all juſti- "fied and regenerate ſinners ſhall repent, *ſemper* "*fit, procurante ſpiritu.*" It ſeems unreaſonable to demand, What if man himſelf will apoſtatiſe? ſeeing he is, by the grace of GOD, ſo renewed in his will, and put into ſuch a condition, that he cannot will any ſuch thing. "GOD doth "not give unto his ſaints, ſaith *Auſtin*, only ſuch "help without which they could not perſevere "if they would (which was that which he gave "*Adam*;)

" *Adam*;) but he alſo worketh in them the will:
" that becauſe they ſhall not perſevere except
" they both can and will, his bountiful grace
" beſtoweth upon them both the *can* and the *will*:
" for their will is ſo inflamed by the Spirit of
" GOD, that they therefore can, becauſe they
" ſo will; they therefore ſo will, becauſe GOD
" worketh in them to will." Neither is it any diſparagement or injury to the freedom of man's will, that it ſhould be overpowered by divine grace, and determined only to that which is good. The indifferency and fluctuation of the will of man is indeed the imperfection of it; and the more GOD reveals himſelf to the ſoul, as the chiefeſt good, the more this indifferency of the will is deſtroyed, and the faculty is determined; not by being conſtrained, but indeed perfected. O unhappy liberty, for a ſoul to be indifferently affected towards its own happineſs, and to be free to chooſe its own miſery! The nobleſt freedom in the world is, when a ſoul being delivered from its heſitancies, and healed of its indifferences, is carried like a ſhip with ſpread ſails and powerful winds in a moſt ſpeedy, chearful, and ſteady courſe into its own harbour, into the arms and embraces of its own object. The grace of GOD doth never ſo overpower the will of man, as to reduce it to a condition of ſlavery, ſo as that man ſhould not have a proper dominion over his own acts, but I think we generally conclude that, in the world to come, in the future ſtate, the wills of all glorified ſaints ſhall be ſo advanced

vanced and perfected in their freedom, as not in the leaſt to verge towards any thing that is evil, but ſhall in the moſt gladſome and ſteady manner be eternally carried towards their full and glorious object, which the glorified underſtanding ſhall then repreſent in a moſt true, clear, and ample manner; and this we take to be the ſoul's trueſt liberty in the higheſt elevation of it. Now, although it be not altogether thus with us in this preſent world, (for by reaſon of the weakneſs and muddineſs of our underſtandings which do here repreſent GOD unto us ſo faintly and diſadvantageouſly, it comes to paſs that the will cannot ſo freely and fervently, with ſo ardent and generous motions purſue its excellent object, as it ſhall do hereafter) yet I believe that the more GOD reveals himſelf to any ſoul, the more the fluctuations and equilibriouſneſs of it are healed, and a true liberty of will increaſed; and that he doth ſo far reveal himſelf to every truly godly ſoul, as to eſtabliſh this noble freedom in it, in ſuch a degree as will keep it from willing a final departure from him, and carry it certainly (how remiſsly and faintly ſoever) towards the ſupreme and ſovereign good, till it come to be perfectly ſwallowed up in it. A will thus truly and divinely free, though it be not the proper efficient cauſe, yet certainly is an inſeparable concomitant of final perſeverance. So then the more GOD communicateth himſelf to any ſoul, the more powerfully it willeth a nearer conjunction with him; and no ſoul, I conceive, to whom GOD communicateth

municateth himſelf ſavingly, can at any time will an utter ſeparation from him.

As for the fouleſt falls of ſcripture ſaints, that are any where recorded, I know not what more can rationally be inferred from them, but that grace in the creature admits of ebbs and flows, is ſubject to augmentations and diminutions; which I know no ſober perſon that denies. But I think the hiſtory of their lapſes, if we take it altogether, hath a very favourable aſpect upon the doctrine of perſeverance; yea, for ought I know, one great deſign of GOD in penning thoſe relations, might be to confirm this very doctrine, by giving us ſo expreſs and ample an account of their repentance and recovery, that we are indeed to believe they were ſtrengthened by their falls, ſo far were their falls from proving mortal to them: one would think, that if ever the habits of grace ſhould be utterly ſuffocated and extinct, if ever they ſhould languiſh even unto death, it ſhould be under the power of ſuch contrary acts as *David* and *Peter* committed, and eſpecially *Solomon*, whoſe acts, for ought I can ſee, were as foul, and alſo often repeated, which is the likelieſt thing that I know to deſtroy gracious habits. I know there are inſtances given of good *Joaſh*, *Hymeneus*, *Alexander*, and *Demas*, utterly falling from that gracious ſtate, wherein ſometime they had been. But it did never yet appear to me beyond contradiction, that ever they were any of them in ſuch a ſtate. *Joaſh* is put amongſt the number of hypocrites by ſome that have examined

his ſtory: and for ought that can evidently appear to the contrary, *Demas* might be no better. Moſt is pleaded for *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, who put away a good conſcience, and made ſhipwreck of faith, 1 *Tim.* i. 20. But it does not yet appear that the faith which they made ſhipwreck of, was any more than the profeſſion or doctrine of the true faith; yea, rather it doth appear that it was no more. Neither does it at all appear, that they ever had that good conſcience, which they are ſaid, in our tranſlation, to have put away, which may as fitly be rendered, *rejected*; for that we find to be the moſt common uſe of the *Greek* word ἀπωθέω or ἀπωθέομαι, *arceo, prohibeo, reſiſto, renitor, repello*, to reject, repel, or thruſt away from one. I am not confident that this apoſtaſy of theirs was total neither, ſuppoſing it to be an apoſtaſy; for however their faith was ſhipwrecked, poſſibly ſome plank or other of it might be left. And who dare ſay that it was final? the Apoſtle doth not, that I perceive, give them up for loſt, but executes diſcipline upon them, as it ſeems, for their recovery, of which one might think, by the following words, that he had ſome hopes, — *that they may learn not to blaſpheme.* In ſhort then, as to theſe two men, I conceive, that good conſcience which they put away they never had, and the faith which they had was not that good faith. And as to the other two that were named, and indeed as to all other inſtances of the like nature, I ſuppoſe we may give this general anſwer, that either they did but ſeem

to

to ſtand, or they did but ſeem to fall; the former perhaps was the caſe of *Joaſh*, and the latter of *Demas*. Whenever you obſerve therefore the backſlidings of any ſeeming Chriſtians, take heed of concluding raſhly againſt the perſeverance of ſaints, but rather infer with the holy Apoſtle, 1 *John* ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us: had they been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us:* which words, if they be meant only of a communion in doctrine and profeſſion, ſo as to conclude againſt the ſeparation of ſuch as are indeed in ſuch a communion; then we may argue the more ſtrongly, *a minore ad majus*, againſt the final apoſtaſy of any that are in a higher and more excellent communion.

As for thoſe texts of ſcripture that ſeem to ſuppoſe a man's falling away from grace, and turning from righteouſneſs, I conceive a fair anſwer may be given unto them, by diſtinguiſhing righteouſneſs; and ſo it may be granted, that many men have turned away from, and utterly made ſhipwreck of their legal righteouſneſs, conſiſting in an external conformity to the letter of the precepts of the law, void of the ſupernatural and divine principle: it is indeed the common lot of theſe men that ſpring up thus fairly, and yet have no root, to *wither away*, Matt. xiii. 6. Luke viii. 6. And yet, on the other hand, it abides an everlaſting maxim of truth, *Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God*, 1 John iii. 9. If

there be any texts that ſeem to ſpeak of apoſtatiſing from an evangelical righteouſneſs, a righteouſneſs of faith, and ſo cannot well be ſalved by this diſtinction, as that in *Heb.* x. 38. and ſome others, it muſt be conſidered that ſuppoſitions are made of things impoſſible as well as poſſible, yea, and that even in the ſcriptures themſelves, as ſome have obſerved from *Gal.* i. 8. 1 *Cor.* xv. 14. which texts do not at all imply what they ſuppoſe. I know indeed that eternal ſalvation is ordinarily entailed upon perſeverance, and ſo is promiſed to us in ſcripture, as it were conditionally, *John* viii. 31. *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed.* Col. i. 21, 22, 23. *You hath he reconciled in the body of his fleſh, through death, to preſent you holy, and unblameable, and unreproveable in his ſight, if ye continue in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the goſpel, &c.* To the ſame purpoſe are thoſe words, *He that endureth to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved*; and, *Rev.* ii. 26. *He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give, &c.* All which do ſtrongly imply that there is no ſalvation but in a way of perſeverance; and the words being laid down thus conditionally, eſpecially the words firſt quoted, are indeed cautionary and quickning to the dull and ſluggiſh minds of men, but do not neceſſarily imply any uncertainty or doubtfulneſs in the thing itſelf, no more than thoſe words of the Apoſtle *Peter*, 1 Pet. i. 10. compared with the latter end of the twelfth verſe, where he doth affirm them to be *eſtabliſhed in the truth*, and yet at

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the ſame time doth ſpeak to them by way of caution and encouragement. There are many texts that ſeem to ſuppoſe the apoſtaſy of men in a ſtate of regeneration, but not one that doth aſſert it, that ever I could yet find; but they are almoſt without number, that, to my apprehenſion, do more than ſeem to aſſert the contrary, *viz.* their final perſeverance: of which perſeverance we have alſo, through the goodneſs of GOD, thouſands of inſtances; but no man could ever yet produce one inſtance of the contrary, but by mere conjecture; which conjectures, let them that make them ſee that they be neither over charitable towards men, or uncharitable towards GOD. Wherefore do I conclude that what is ſaid concerning heaven and hell in the parable, as to one branch of it, is true of grace and wickedneſs; a gulf is fixed, and they that would paſs from GOD to ſin and the devil cannot: not that there ſhall ever be in any a real and predominant deſire ſo to paſs, as I ſuppoſe I have already proved; but it denotes the impoſſibility of the thing. It is equally impoſſible that a godly ſoul ſhould fall from GOD, and become an hater of him, fall from his love and image, and take upon him the image of the devil, as it was for *Lazarus* to quit *Abraham*'s boſom for the flames of hell: the caſe ſeems to be the ſame, the former being the moſt real heaven, and the latter the trueſt hell. True religion is that holy fire which, being once kindled in the ſoul from heaven, never goes out; whereof the fire of the altar was but a faint

and imperfect reſemblance: it is as true in this reſpect of good men, as it is of wicked men in another, *their fire never goes out.*

And here now we are preſented with another great difference between true and counterfeit religion. All counterfeit religion will fade in time, though never ſo ſpecious and flouriſhing; all dew will paſs away, though ſome lie much longer than other; all land-floods will fail; yea, the flood of *Noah* at length dried up, though it were of many months duration. But this *well of water*, which our Saviour ſpeaks of here, will never utterly fail; cold adverſity cannot freeze it up; ſcorching proſperity cannot dry it up: the upper ſprings of uncreated grace and goodneſs will evermore feed thoſe nether ſprings of grace and holineſs in the creature. Though heaven and earth paſs away, yet ſhall the ſeed of God remain; *He that hath begun a good work will certainly perform it*, Phil. i. 6. Where the grace of God hath begotten a divine principle and ſpirit of true religion in a ſoul, there is the central force even of heaven itſelf ſtill attracting and carrying the ſoul in its motions thitherward, until it have lodged it in the very boſom and heart of God. If any principle lower than true religion actuate a man, it will certainly waſte and be exhauſted; though it may carry him ſwiftly in a rapid motion, yet not in a ſteady; though it may carry him high, yet not quite through. A meteor that is exhaled from the earth by a foreign force, though it may mount high in appearance,

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and brave it in a blaze, enough to be envied by the poor twinkling ſtars, and to be admired by ordinary ſpectators, yet its fate is to fall down, and ſhamefully confeſs its baſe original. That religion which men put on only for a cloke, will wear out and drop into rags, if it be not preſently thrown by as a garment out of faſhion. You have read of the ſeeming righteouſneſs of *Jehu*, founded in ambition and cruelty; the piety and devotion of *Joaſh*, grounded upon a good and virtuous education; the zeal of *Saul* for the worſhip of GOD, and his fat ſacrifices, growing upon a root of ſuperſtition, as *Samuel*, that man of GOD, interprets it, 1 *Sam.* xv. 22. and you have ſeen the ſhameful iſſue of all theſe diſſemblers, and the ſtinking ſnuff in which all this candle-light religion ended, very much unlike to that ſun-light luſtre of true and genuine goodneſs, *which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*; according to that elegant deſcription which the Spirit of GOD makes of it in the writings of *Solomon*, whoſe pen hath as much adorned this great truth, as his life hath blotted it, *Prov.* iv. 18. To this purpoſe I might fairly alledge the frequent teſtimonies which the HOLY GHOST in ſcripture gives concerning ſuch hypocritical and unprincipled profeſſors, that, having no root, they wither away in a ſcorching ſeaſon, that they are again entangled in the pollutions of the world and overcome, that like dogs they turn to their own vomit again, and like ſows wallow in the mire from which they had been waſhed, 2 *Pet.* ii. 20, 22.

together with many others of the ſame nature: as alſo the propheſies that are made concerning them, that that which they ſeemed to have ſhall be taken away from them, *Luke* viii. 18. that they ſhall proceed no further; *for their folly ſhall be manifeſt unto all men*, 2 Tim. iii. 9. that *evil men and ſeducers*, and of thoſe ſelf-ſeducers are the worſt, *ſhall wax worſe and worſe*, 2 Tim. iii. 13. with other places of the like nature. It were eaſy to record many hiſtories of men, eſpecially of great men, who have ſpeedily, I had almoſt ſaid diſdainfully, thrown off that ſemblance of humility, meekneſs, ſelf-denial, juſtice, and faithfulneſs, which they had put on for a vizard during their probationaryſhip for preferment, the better to accompliſh their ſelfiſh deſigns, and to be poſſeſſed of ſome baſe ends of their own. But yet I will not deny but that a hypocrite may maintain a fair conformity to, and correſpondence with the letter of the law of GOD; he may continue fair and ſpecious to the very end of his life; yea, perhaps may go to his grave undiſcovered either to himſelf, or any in the world beſides. I believe many men have lived and died Phariſees, have never apoſtatiſed from that righteouſneſs which they profeſſed, but have perſevered in their formality and hypocriſy to the laſt. But yet, although that counterfeit righteouſneſs and religion may poſſibly not fade away, yet nevertheleſs being of an earthly and ſelfiſh conſtitution it is tranſitory and fading; and if it were ſoundly aſſaulted and battered with perſecutions and temptations,

tions, no doubt would actually vaniſh and diſappear; on the other hand, the promiſe of GOD is pregnant and precious, *Iſa.* xl. 31. *They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength; they ſhall walk and not faint.*

TAKE encouragement from hence, all ye that love the LORD; go on in the ſtrength of GOD; be the more lively, by how much the more you are aſſured that this well of water ſhall ſpring up in you into everlaſting life. Make this good uſe of this comfortable doctrine: will GOD indeed work in you *both to will and to do?* why then ſo much the rather *work out your own ſalvation*, according to the Apoſtle, *Phil.* ii. 12. Will the LORD GOD *be with you?* will he *not fail you nor forſake you till you have finiſhed all your work?* why then *be ſtrong and of good courage*, and do as good *David* infers and argues, 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 20. Have you this hope, this firm ground of hope in the promiſe and goodneſs of GOD? why then, *purify yourſelves as God is pure*, according to the Apoſtle, 1 *John* iii. 3. Stop the mouths of thoſe men that ſay the doctrine of perſeverance is prejudicial to godlineſs: let them ſee, and be forced to acknowledge it, that the more a godly ſoul is aſſured of the infinite and unchangeable love and care of GOD towards him, the more he is winged with love and zeal, with ſpeed mounting up thither daily, where he longs to arrive. They that underſtand the doctrine of perſeverance, do alſo underſtand that they muſt accompliſh it in a way of dutiful dili-

gence and watchful willingneſs; and if any grow profane and licentious, and apoſtatiſe from the way of righteouſneſs which they have known, it is an evident argument to them that they are no ſaints, and then what will the doctrine of the perſeverance of ſaints avail them?

CHAP. VII.

Religion conſidered in the conſequent of not thirſting: the phraſe explained two ways, both reſulting into the ſame general truth, viz. *That divine grace gives a ſolid ſatisfaction to the ſoul. This aphoriſm confirmed by ſome ſcriptures, and largely explained in ſix propoſitions. The firſt, That there is a raging thirſt in every ſoul of man after ſome ultimate and ſatisfactory good. The ſecond, That every natural man thirſteth principally after happineſs in the creature. The third, That no man can find that ſoul-filling ſatisfaction in any creature-enjoyment which every natural man principally ſeeketh therein; this proſecuted in two particulars. The fourth, That grace takes not away the ſoul's thirſt after happineſs, but much enflames it; the reaſon aſſigned. The fifth, That the godly ſoul thirſteth no more after reſt in any worldly thing, but in* GOD *alone; this proſecuted in both the branches of it; in the former more largely, where inquiry is made how far a godly man may be ſaid to thirſt after the creature, and anſwered in four particulars: the latter briefly touched upon.*

on. The ſixth, That in the enjoyment of GOD *the ſoul is at reſt; and this in a double ſenſe,* viz. *ſo as that it is perfectly matched with its object; two things noted for the clearing of this. Secondly, ſo ſatisfied as to have joy and pleaſure in him; a double account given of that joy. The chapter expires in a paſſionate lamentation taken up over the levity and earthlineſs of Chriſtian minds.*

HITHERTO we have taken a view of true religion, as it ſtands deſcribed in this pregnant text, by its original, nature, and properties: we are now to conſider it in the certain and genuine conſequent of it; and that is in one word, affirmatively, *ſatisfaction*; or if you will, negatively, *not thirſting*: for ſo it is, in our SAVIOUR's phraſe, *Whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt.*

WHILST I addreſs myſelf to the explication of this phraſe, I ſuppoſe I need not be ſo exact and curious as to tell you in order, with a certain kind of ſcholaſtical gravity, firſt what is not; and then what is meant by it: for I preſume no body will dream of a corporeal or groſs kind of thirſting to be meant here. Grace doth no more quench the thirſt of the body, than elementary water can relieve the panting of the ſoul. Nay, he himſelf was ſubject to this groſs kind of thirſt, who gave to others the water whereof, if they drank, they ſhould never thirſt more. If it be underſtood of a ſpiritual thirſt, yet I ſuppoſe I need not to tell you neither,

ther, that then it muſt not be underſtood abſolutely: for it cannot poſſibly be, that the thirſt of a ſoul ſhould be perfectly allayed till all its faculties be filled up to the brim of their reſpective capacities, which will never be until it be ſwallowed up in the infinite and unbounded ocean of the ſupreme good.

BUT I conceive we may fairly come to the meaning of this phraſe, *never thirſt*, either by adding or diſtinguiſhing.

1. THEN let us ſupply the ſentence thus, *Whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt after any other water.* There is no worldly liquor can be ſo accommodated or attempered to the palate as to give it an univerſal ſatisfaction, ſo as that a man ſhould be perfectly mortified to all variety: but this heavenly water which our SAVIOUR treats of here, is ſo fitted to the palate of ſpirits, and brings ſuch ſatisfaction along with it, that the ſoul that is made to drink of it does ſuperſede its chaſe of all other delights, counts all other waters but a filthy and ſtinking puddle, thirſts no more after any other thing, neither through neceſſity nor for variety. The more the ſoul drinks of this water indeed, the more it thirſteth after fuller meaſures and larger portions of the ſame; and does not only ſuck in divine virtue and influences, but even longs to be itſelf ſucked up in the divinity, as we ſhall ſee further in the procedure of this diſcourſe: but its thirſt after all created good, all the waters of the ciſtern, are here-

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by extinguiſhed or at leaſt maſtered and mortified. Or,

2. By diſtinguiſhing upon thirſt, the ſenſe of the phraſe will be clearly this, *Whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him* ſhall never be at a loſs more, never be to ſeek any more, never be uncertain or unſatisfied as to his main happineſs or ſupreme object; he ſhall not rove and range up and down the world in an unfixedneſs and ſuſpence any more; ſhall not run up and down to ſeek ſatisfaction and reſt any more. From an internal unſatisfiedneſs of the body ſpring violent and reſtleſs motions and runnings up and down, by which thirſt is contracted; ſo that, by a metonomy, thirſt comes to be uſed for unſatisfiedneſs, which is the remote cauſe of it; and, by a metaphor, the ſame phraſe comes to be applied to the ſoul. I ſuppoſe I am warranted, by the ſacred ſtile, thus to interpret, eſpecially by the uſe and explication of the phraſe in *Jer.* ii. 25. where the Prophet intimates, that by thirſt is to be meant a reſtleſs and diſcontented running up and down to ſeek ſatisfaction, *Withhold thy foot from being unſhod, and thy throat from thirſt*; which two phraſes are of the ſame importance, and ſignify no more than ceaſe from gadding after your idols; and that this is the meaning of that thirſting appears by the anſwer that the wilful and deſperate people make in the ſequel of the verſe: for inſtead of ſaying, No, but we will thirſt; they cry, *No, but after them will I go.* Thirſt then is in an unſatisfiedneſs and ſpiritual diſ-

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quiet to range up and down ſeeking ſomething wherein ultimately to acquieſce. And, in this ſenſe, it is moſt true what our LORD here pronounceth, that *whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt.* Of which thirſt that famous proclamation of our SAVIOUR's is to be underſtood, *John* vii. 37. *If any man thirſt let him come unto me and drink*; in which place alſo we muſt neceſſarily underſtand what is here expreſſed, that then he ſhall never thirſt more.

IT matters not much by which of theſe two ways we explain the phraſe here of *not thirſting*; for, according to either of them, it will reſult into this theological maxim, *viz.* that "Divine grace, or "true Chriſtian religion, gives a real and ſolid "ſatisfaction to the ſoul that is principled with "it."

THIS will appear plain though we apply but one text out of each Teſtament of the holy ſcriptures thereunto. I think it cannot reaſonably be doubted, but that the prophecy and promiſe made in *Iſa.* xlix. 10. is to be performed unto believers in this preſent life; for ſo muſt the foregoing verſes neceſſarily be underſtood: and there we have the doctrine expreſsly aſſerted, *They ſhall not hunger nor thirſt, &c. for he that hath mercy on them ſhall lead them, even by the ſprings of water ſhall he guide them.* To which thoſe words of our SAVIOUR are parallel, *John* vi. 35. *He that believeth on me ſhall never thirſt:* which doctrine of his is yet amplified and enlarged in *John* vii. 38. *He that believeth on me,*

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as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water. What greater ſecurity from thirſt can be deſired, than that one ſhould be led by ſprings of water? Yes, one may be led by the ſprings of water, and yet not be ſuffered to drink of them: well therefore to put all out of fear, the godly ſoul ſhall contain within himſelf a ſpring of water; he ſhall have rivers of living waters in himſelf; and for his fuller ſecurity, theſe rivers ſhall be ever flowing too. It ſhall ſuffice at preſent, thus briefly to have eſtabliſhed this concluſion. And now, having wrapt up the meaning of the words in this ſhort poſition, I ſhall endeavour to unfold it in theſe ſix following propoſitions.

1*ſt*, "THERE is a raging thirſt in every ſoul of "man after ſome ultimate and ſatisfactory good." The GOD of nature hath implanted in every created nature a ſecret but powerful tendency towards a centre, whoſe dictates, ariſing out of the very conſtitution of it, it cannot diſobey until it ceaſe to be ſuch, and utterly apoſtatiſe from the ſtate of its creation. And the nobler any being is, the more excellent is the object aſſigned unto it, and the more ſtrong and potent, and uncontrolable are its raptures and motions thereunto. Wherefore the ſoul of man muſt needs alſo have its own proper centre, which muſt be ſomething ſuperior to, and more excellent than itſelf, able to fill up all its indigencies, to match all its capacities, to maſter all its cravings, and give a plenary and perfect ſatisfaction: which therefore can be no other than uncreated

uncreated goodneſs, even GOD himſelf. It was not poſſible that GOD ſhould make man of ſuch faculties, and thoſe of ſuch capaciouſneſs as we ſee them, and appoint any thing below himſelf to be his ultimate happineſs. Now, although it be ſadly true, that the faculties of the ſoul are miſerably maimed, depraved, benighted, and diſtorted; yet I do not ſee that the ſoul is utterly unnatured by ſin, ſo as that any other thing ſhould be obtruded upon it for its centre and happineſs, than the ſame infinite good that was from the beginning ſuch, or ſo as that its main and cardinal motions ſhould be ultimately directed to any other than its natural and primitive object. The natural underſtanding hath not indeed any clear or diſtinct ſight of this bleſſed object; but yet it retains a darker and more general apprehenſion of him, and may be ſaid, even in all its purſuits of other things, to be ſtill groping in the dark after him: neither is it without ſome ſecret and latent ſenſe of GOD, that the will of man chooſeth or embraceth any thing for good. The Apoſtle ſticks not to affirm, that the idolatrous *Athenians* themſelves did worſhip GOD, *Acts* xvii. 23. though at that time indeed they knew not what they worſhipped: their worſhip was ſecretly and implicitly directed unto GOD, and did ultimately reſolve itſelf into him, though they were not aware of it, —*whom ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you*, and that he declared GOD unto them, appears abundantly by the following verſes. What he ſays in point of worſhip, the ſame methinks I may

may ſay in point of love, truſt, delight, dependence, and apply it to all ſorts of idolaters, as well as image-worſhippers, and affirm that the covetous idolater, even when he moſt fondly hugs his bags, and moſt firmly confideth in his riches, doth ignorantly love and truſt in GOD; the proud idolater, in the higheſt acts of ſelf-ſeeking, and ſelf-pleaſing, doth ignorantly admire and adore GOD; the ambitious idolater, even in the hotteſt chaſe of ſecular glory, and popular applauſe, doth ignorantly purſue, and advance GOD. For that reſt, contentment, peace, happineſs, and ſatisfaction, which theſe miſtaken ſouls do aim at, what is it other than GOD, though they attribute it to ſomething elſe which cannot afford it, and ſo commit a real blaſphemy? for they that do in their hearts, and courſe of their lives, aſcribe a filling and ſatisfying virtue to riches, pleaſures, or honours, do as truly, though not ſo loudly, blaſpheme, as they who cried out concerning the calf of gold, *Exod.* xxxii. 4. *Theſe be thy gods, O Iſrael! &c.* And in this ſenſe that I have been ſpeaking, one may ſafely affirm, that the moſt profeſſed Atheiſt in the world doth ſecretly purſue the GOD whom he openly denies, whilſt his will is catching at that which his judgment renounceth, and he allows that deity in his luſts which he will not own in heaven. The hypocrite profeſſes to know GOD, but in works denies him; on the other hand, the Atheiſt, though in words he deny GOD, yet in his works he profeſſeth him: ſo natural and neceſſary it is for all men to acknowledge

ledge a deity, though ſome are ſo brutiſh and beſotted as to confine him to their own bellies; of whom the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Phil.* iii. 19. *Whoſe god is their belly:* I ſay natural; for they are not only ſome few men of better education, and more contemplative complections, that hunt after this inviſible and ſatisfying good; but indeed the moſt vulgar ſouls, retaining ſtill the nature of ſouls, are perpetually catching at an ultimate happineſs and ſatisfaction, and are ſecretly ſtung and tormented with the want of it. Certainly the motions of a ſoul are more ſtrong and weighty than we are ordinarily aware of; and, I think, one may ſafely conclude, that if there were no latent ſenſe, or natural ſcience of GOD, the poor man could not ſpend the powers of his ſoul ſo intenſely for the purchaſing a little food and raiment for the body, nor the covetous man ſo inſatiably thirſt after houſes and land, and a larger heap of refined earth: did they not ſecretly imagine, I mean, ſome contentment, happineſs, or ſatisfaction, were to be drunk in together with theſe acquirements, they would ſeem to be but dry and inſipid morſels to a ſoul; which ultimate happineſs and ſatisfaction, as I ſaid before, can be no other than GOD himſelf, whom theſe miſtaken ſouls do ignorantly adore, and feel for in the dark. Neither let any one think that this ignorant and unwary purſuit of GOD can paſs for religion, or be acceptable in the ſight of GOD; for as it is impoſſible that ever any man ſhould ſtumble into a happy ſtate, without foreſight and free choice, and be

be in it without any kind of ſenſe or feeling of it; ſo neither can GOD accept the blind for ſacrifice, or be pleaſed with any thing leſs than reaſonable ſervice from a reaſonable creature. As the *Athenians*, worſhipping GOD by altars and images, are counted ſuperſtitious, not devout, ſo the whole generation of groſs and ſenſual ſouls admiring, loving, and ignorantly coveting after GOD in the pictures and images of true goodneſs, are indeed truly blaſphemers and idolaters, but religious they cannot be. We cannot excuſe them from idolatry, who direct their worſhip purpoſely to the true GOD by or through images; much leſs ſure can we be favourable to them who beſtow their love, joy, confidence, and delight, ignorantly upon the ſupreme and ſelf-ſufficient good, by or through any created good, in which they, as far as they underſtand, do terminate their devotion. I do not ſay that all ſouls have a diſtinct diſcovery of the good they aim at, it is evident they have not; but yet the will of every man is ſecretly in chaſe of ſome ultimate end and happineſs, and indeed in its eager tendencies outflies the underſtanding. All which myſtery ſeems to be wrapped up in that ſhort but pithy inquiry, which, if it were a little otherwiſe modified, would be an excellent deſcription of the natural ſoul, *Pſalm* iv. 6. *Many ſay, Who will ſhew us any good?* The nature of the object is ſet out in the word *good*, the eagerneſs of the motion, in the form of the queſtion, *Who will ſhew us?* and the ignorance of the mover appears in the indeterminate-

minateneſs of this object, which is well explained by the ſupply of the word *any*; *Who will ſhew us any good?* And that this is the cry of every rational ſoul is inſinuated by the word *many*; which *many* is alſo in metre multiplied into the greater ſort, and muſt indeed neceſſarily be extended unto all.

2*dly*, "EVERY natural man thirſteth principally "after happineſs and ſatisfaction in the creature." The fall of the ſoul conſiſteth in its ſinking itſelf into the animal life, and the buſineſs of every unrenewed ſoul is in one kind or other ſtill to gratify the ſame life; for although, as I have ſhewn, GOD is at the bottom of theſe mens cares, and loves, and deſires, and implicitly in all their thirſtings, yet I may well ſay of them, as GOD ſays of the *Aſſyrian* monarch, at what time he executed his pleaſure in correcting his people *Iſrael*, Iſa. x. 7. *Howbeit he meaneth not ſo, neither doth his heart think ſo.* GOD is not in all their thoughts, whilſt they purſue that in the creature which really none but GOD alone can be unto them. They do ultimately direct, as to their intention, all their cares, and covetings, and thirſtings, to ſome created object; all which are calculated for the animal life, the gratifying and accompliſhing their own baſe luſts. This is very apparent in the idolatry of the Pagans, whoſe luſts gave being to their gods; and ſo their deities were as many as their concupiſcences and filthy paſſions: to ſacrifice to their own revenge and ſenſuality, under the names of *Mars*, *Bacchus*, and *Venus*, what was it elſe but to proclaim

claim to all the world that they took the higheſt contentment and ſatisfaction in the fulfilling of ſuch kind of luſts? this was unto them their god or ſupreme felicity. The caſe is the ſame, though not ſo expreſsly and profeſſedly, with all carnal Chriſtians who, although they profeſs the true GOD, yet in truth make him only a pander to their own luſts and baſe ends; though they *name the name of Chriſt*, yet in very deed deify their own paſſions, and ſacrifice to the gratification of their animal powers. The Pſalmiſt, as we have ſeen, determines the main end of all men to be τὸ ἀγαθὸν, or good, *Pſalm* iv. 6. but, leſt any man ſhould be deceived in them, he preſently tells us where this good was placed, *ver.* 7. *viz.* in *corn and wine*; by which we muſt underſtand the animal life, and whatſoever adminiſters to the delight thereof. And certainly this will go far; for not only meats and drinks, venereal pleaſures, gorgeous apparel, ſumptuous buildings, ſplendid deſcent, honourable preferments, popular applauſe, inordinate recreations, and an unweildy bulk of earthly riches; but alſo orthodox opinions, philoſophical, political, yea, and ſcholaſtical learning, fair profeſſions, much pompous worſhip, yea, and worſhip induſtriouſly void of pomp, ſpecious performances; to which we may add the moſt ſeemly exerciſes of undaunted valour, unſhaken conſtancy, unbribed juſtice, uninterrupted temperance, unſpotted chaſtity, and unlimited charity; if much giving may deſerve ſo ſacred a name; even all theſe, and as many more,

may

may ſerve only as fuel for the rapacious fire of luſt and ſelf-love, to maintain and keep alive the mere animal, or at moſt logical life, and are ordinarily deſigned as ſacrifices to that which we ſignificantly call *ſelf*, in contradiſtinction from GOD. I need not here declaim againſt covetous, luxurious, ambitious ſouls, the Apoſtle having ſo expreſsly prevented me by his plain and punctual arraignment of ſuch men, *Col.* iii. 5. *Phil.* iii. 19. where he charges them with placing a deity in their bags and bellies: otherwiſe I durſt appeal to all the world that are not parties, yea to the parties themſelves, whether it be GOD or themſelves that theſe perſons do intend to ſerve, and pleaſe, and gratify; whether it be a real aſſimilation unto GOD, and the true honour of his name, or ſome luſt or humour of ſelf-pleaſing, ſelf-advancing, and ſelf-enjoying, that they ſacrifice their cares and pains, and the main thirſtings of their ſouls unto. I am confident it will be eaſily acknowledged, that the covetous, voluptuous, and ambitious, do ſacrifice all they are and do to the latter; but, alas! it is not yet agreed among men who are ſuch; the hypotheſis is granted, but the theſis is diſputed: and indeed this is no wonder neither; for it is as natural for the animal ſelf-life to ſhift off guilt as it is to contract it; and the pride of the natural man is no leſs conſpicuous in his wrongful endeavours to ſeem innocent of what he is indeed guilty, than his covetouſneſs and voluptuouſneſs are apparent in the matter wherein his guilt conſiſteth. They

are

are not only theſe, and ſome few of the groſſeſt and profaneſt ſort of ſouls, that are guilty in this kind which I have been deſcribing, though they indeed are groſsly and moſt viſibly guilty; but verily the whole generation of mere animal men, who have no principle of divine life implanted in them, do ſpend all their days, beſtow all their pains, and enjoy all their comforts, in a real ſtrain of blaſphemy, from firſt to laſt. What a blaſphemous kind of philoſophy was that which profeſſedly placed the ſupreme good and chiefeſt happineſs of man in the fruition of pleaſures? And indeed all thoſe kinds of philoſophy which placed it elſewhere, in things below GOD himſelf, and the enjoyment of him, were no leſs profane though they may ſeem ſomewhat leſs beaſtly: for whether the Epicureans idolized their own ſenſes, or the more exalted Stoics deified their own faculty, placing their main contentment in their ſelf-ſufficiency, and the perpetual ſerenity and tranquillity of their own minds, it is too apparent that both the one and the other ſtill moved within the narrow and low ſphere of natural ſelf, and graſped after a deity in the poor dark ſhadows, and glimmering repreſentatives of him. But I am ſpeaking to Chriſtians: and, amongſt theſe, let no man tell me how orthodox his opinions, how pure and ſpiritual his forms, how numerous and ſpecious his performances are, how rightly he pays his homage, and prays to one living GOD by one living Mediator; I will willingly allow, and do with delight obſerve theſe things wherever

wherever they are; but yet all this doth not denominate a Chriſtian: for ſtill that of the Apoſtle muſt hold good, *Rom.* vi. 16. *His ſervants ye are to whom ye obey*; and I may add by ſomewhat a like phraſeology, *His children ye are whom ye reſemble*; his creatures ye are, as far as ye can make yourſelves ſo, whoſe ſufficiency and ſovereignty are moſtly magnified in your hearts; his worſhippers ye are whom ye moſtly love, truſt in, delight in, depend upon; in a word, that is your god which your ſoul doth mainly reſt, and centre, and wrap up itſelf in. And, alas! how viſibly dear and precious is the ſelf-central life, which is ſo univerſally pampered, cheriſhed, and ſacrificed unto, beſides the inviſible and more ſpiritual oblations that are made thereunto. This is as true an Antichriſt in the myſtery as there is any literal Antichriſt in the world; and of this one may as truly ſay, as St *John* doth of the other, *All the world wondereth after the beaſt.* In a word then, whoſoever ſaith in his heart concerning any thing that is not GOD, what that rich man in the goſpel ſaid concerning his goods, *Soul, take thine eaſe* in them *and be merry*, the ſame is an idolater and blaſphemer: and this I affirm to be the language of every apoſtate ſpirit, and unregenerate ſoul of man.

3*dly*, "NO man can find that happineſs, and "ſoul-filling ſatisfaction in any creature-enjoy-"ment, which every natural man principally ſeek-"eth therein." Here are two things to be ſpoken to, *viz.* the enjoyments of men, or what they poſ-

ſeſs

ſeſs, and the ſatisfaction which the natural man ſeeketh in ſuch poſſeſſions. For the firſt of theſe, I do not eaſily believe that ever any natural man had his fill of ſuch poſſeſſions, I mean as to the quantity of them; he never had ſo much of them as to be able freely to ſay, "It is enough." The rational ſoul hath a ſtrong and inſatiable appetite, and whereſoever it imagineth its beloved prey to be found, and filling enjoyment to be had, it is exceeding greedy and rapacious; whether the ſame will ever be able to afford it or no, it matters not. The animal life is that voracious idol, not like *Bel* in the ſtory, which ſeems only to eat up, but which doth really devour all the fat morſels, and ſenſual pleaſures that are ſacrificed unto it, and yet is not filled therewith. The whole employment of the natural man, *quantum, quantum eſt*, is nothing elſe but as the Apoſtle elegantly deſcribes it, *Rom.* xiii. 14. *To make proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil it in the luſts thereof:* wherein yet, to ſpeak the truth, he loſes his labour; for he ſacrifices all to an unſatisfiable idol, and pours it into a gulf that hath neither bottom nor bounds, but ſwalloweth up all into its barren womb, and is rather made to thirſt, than to ceaſe from thirſting by all that is or can be adminiſtered unto it. I take that of *Solomon*, Eccl. i. 8. to be a clear proof in general of what I affirm, *The eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear filled with hearing*; the eye of man, as little as it is, is bigger than the whole conſpicable world, which, although it may be wearied with looking upon va-

rious objects, as the *Engliſh* annotators obſerve upon theſe words, yet ſtill deſires new ones, and can drink them in without ſurfeiting: ſo that, although the acts of the eye be ſcant and finite, yet the luſts of the eye ſeem to have a kind of infinity in them. And indeed by the unſatiableneſs of the eye and ear, is meant the greedineſs or voracity of the fleſh or animal life, as Mr *Cartwright* hath well obſerved upon *Prov.* xxvii. 20. *Hell and deſtruction are never full, ſo the eyes of a man are never ſatisfied*; where, by not being ſatisfied, is meant not having enough in quantity, as appears by the ſimilitude in the former part of the verſe. To the ſame ſenſe he ſpeaks, *Eccleſ.* iv. 8. and v. 10. It would be endleſs to relate the monſtrous and inſatiable gapings of covetous, ambitious, voluptuous, proud, and vainglorious minds after their reſpective idols. And indeed I need not deſcend to particular inſtances; for I ſuppoſe never any natural man could heartily ſay he had enough of riches, promotions, applauſe, ſenſual delights, eloquence, policy, proweſs, or victory, or of any other thing which is accommodated to the gratification of the fleſh, no more than a godly ſoul ſojourning upon earth could ever be yet able to ſay it had enough of GOD and eternal life. So that, in a word, I know not how to apply any deſcription to this inſatiable and devouring principle more properly than that which the Prophet makes of hell, *Iſa.* v. 14. *She enlargeth herſelf, and openeth her mouth without meaſure, and all glory, multitude, and pomp, deſcend into it.* I know

know there are of these men that pretend to have enough in quantity of these fleshly provisions; but I fear falsly and unjustly: for, as for the rich and honourable of the earth, it is too evident that they are still climbing higher, and grasping after more, as the great *Alexander* is said to have whined after more worlds, when he conceited himself to be master of all this: as for the poorer and meaner sort of people, who are as ready sometimes to lay claim to this virtue of thinking themselves to have enough, as any other people whatsoever, it is too manifest to a wise observer, that it is not a real apprehension that they have enough, but either a lowness or weakness of spirit, arising from the meanness of their education, or a downright despair of ever getting more.

But be it imagined that the enjoyments of some natural men are enough in respect of quantity, yet still there is certainly wanting a true and sincere satisfaction of soul in such possessions; no man of all these finds that real happiness in those things which he so vehemently hunteth after. *Solomon* reduces all of pleasure and contentment that is to be found in multiplied riches to a very pitiful *summa totalis*, Eccles. v. 11. *What good is there to the owners thereof, save the beholding of them with their eyes?* And, alas! what is the sight of the eye to the satisfaction of the soul! The whole conspicable world is utterly too scant for, and incommensurate to the wide and deep capacity of an immortal spirit; so that the same can no more satisfy

than a leſs can fill a greater, which is ſurely impoſſible. Whatever is in the world out of GOD, is deſcribed by the Prophet, *Iſa.* lv. 2. to be *not bread*, there is the unſuitableneſs; and *not to ſatisfy*, there is the inſufficiency of it as to the ſoul of man: on the other hand, this ſoul of man is ſo vaſtly capacious, that tho' it be alſo never ſo greedy and rapacious, ſnatching on the right hand, and catching on the left hand, as the Prophet deſcribes his people, *Iſa.* ix. 20. yet ſtill it is hungry and unſatisfied. Which ravenous and inſatiable appetite of the ſenſual ſoul, is elegantly deſcribed by the Prophet in the ſimilitude of an whoriſh woman, who proſtituteth herſelf to all comers, and *multiplieth her fornications*, yet is *unſatiable*, *is not*, *cannot be ſatisfied*, Ezek. xvi. 28, 29. The ſoul may indeed feed, yea, and ſurfeit upon, but it can never ſatisfy itſelf from itſelf, or from any created good; nothing can ultimately determine and centre the motions of a ſoul, but ſomething ſuperior to its own eſſence; which, whilſt it miſſes of, it is as it were divided againſt itſelf, perpetually ſtruggling and fluctuating, and travelling in pangs with ſome new deſign or other to be at reſt; like the old lioneſs in the parable of *Ezekiel*, breeding up one whelp after another to be a lion wherein to confide, but diſappointed in all; or like the poor diſcontented butterfly, lighting and catching every where but ſticking no where, adoring ſomething for a god to-day, which it will be ready to fling into the fire to-morrow, after their manner of creating

ating gods to themſelves, whom the Poet brings in ſaying,

——— *Hodie mihi Jupiter eſto,*
Cras mihi truncus eris, ficulnus, inutile lignum.

NEITHER the quantity, variety, or duration of any created objects, can poſſibly fill up that large and noble capacity wherewith GOD hath endued the rational ſoul; but having departed from its centre, and not knowing how to return to its original, it wanders up and down as it were in a wilderneſs, and having an imperfect glimmering ſight at ſomething better than what itſelf as yet either is or hath, but not being able to attain to it, it is miſerably tormented, even as a man in a thirſt which he cannot quench; yea, the more he runs up and down to ſeek water, the more is his thirſt increaſed whilſt he miſſes of it; ſo this diſtempered and diſtracted ſoul, whilſt it ſeeks to quench its thirſt at the creature-ciſtern does but inflame it, and in a continual purſuit of reſt becomes moſt reſtleſs. That every unregenerate ſoul is in ſuch a diſtreſſed, weary, reſtleſs ſtate as I have been deſcribing, appears moſt evidently by thoſe famous goſpel proclamations; one in *Iſa.* lv. 1, 3. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters*; where, by the thirſters are meant thoſe unfixed, unſatisfied ſouls, as appears by the ſecond verſe; the other in *Matt.* xi. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour, &c.* where the promiſe of giving reſt does plainly imply the reſtleſs ſtate of the perſons invited. There are a certain horror and anguiſh in ſin and wickedneſs,

even long before it be ſwallowed up in hell; a certain vanity and vexation are folded up in all earthly enjoyments, though the ſame do not always ſting and pierce the ſoul alike: ſo true is that famous aphoriſm of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *There is no peace to the wicked.*

4*thly*, "GRACE takes not away this thirſt of "the ſoul after happineſs and plenary ſatisfaction." Love and deſire, and a tendency towards bleſſedneſs, are ſo woven into the nature of the ſoul, and inlaid in the very eſſence of it, that ſhe cannot poſſibly put them off, however it is the work of grace to change and rectify them, as we ſhall ſee under the next head: the ſoul of man is ἄϋλον καὶ ἀσώματον πῦρ, a kind of immaterial fire, an inextinguiſhable activity, always neceſſarily catching at ſome object or other, in conjunction with which ſhe thinks to be happy: and therefore, if ſhe be rent from herſelf and the world, and be mortified to the love of fleſhly and animal luſts, ſhe will certainly cleave to ſome higher and more excellent object, as will more clearly appear by and by. Grace does not ſtupify the ſoul as to its ſenſe of its own indigency and poverty, but indeed makes it more abundantly ſenſible and importunate. There are more ſtrong motions, and more powerful appetites in the godly ſoul towards its true and proper happineſs, than in the ungodly and wicked. For the underſtanding of the regenerate ſoul is ſo enlightened, as that it doth preſent the will with an amiable and ſatisfactory object; which object therefore being more diſtinctly

distinctly and perfectly apprehended, doth also apprehend or lay hold upon the soul, and attract her unto itself. *Oculi sunt in amore duces*, is most true of the eye of the soul, I mean the understanding, that first affects the heart with amorous passions. The first and fundamental error and mistake of the rational soul seems to lie here, even in the understanding; here lies the very root of the degenerate soul's distemper; and if this were thoroughly restored and healed, so as to present the will with pure and proper ideas and representations of GOD, it might be hoped that this ductile faculty would not be long before it clave unto him entirely; nay, it may be doubted whether it could possibly resist the dictates of it. Now in the regenerate soul this faculty is repaired; yea, I may say, that the spirit of regeneration first of all spreads itself upon the understanding, and awakens in it a sense of self-indigency, and of the perfect, all-sufficient, suitable, and satisfactory fulness of GOD, in whom it sees all beauty, sweetness, and loveliness, in an infinitely ineffable manner wrapped up and contained; which will be so far from allaying the essential thirst of the soul, and stifling its eager gaspings, that it must needs give a mighty edge and ardour to its inclinations, and put it upon a more bold and earnest contention towards this glorious object, and charm the whole soul into the very arms of GOD. Therefore not thirsting in the text, must not be understood absolutely, as if grace did utterly extinguish the natural activities of the soul, and finish

its propenſions: but the regenerate and gracious ſoul doth not thirſt in ſuch ſenſe, as thirſt implies a want of a ſuitable good, or diſſatisfaction, or includes torment properly ſo called. In this notion of thirſt grace doth indeed quench it, as I intimated in the beginning of this diſcourſe, and will further appear in the procedure of it. But as to this moſt eſſential thirſt, this natural ἔρως, or vergency of the ſoul after a central reſt and happineſs, the ſame is ſo far from being extinguiſhed or moderated either by divine grace, that it is greatly improved, and mightily inflamed thereby. I ſuppoſe I need not ſtay upon ſo popular a theme, and ſo acknowledged a ſubject; therefore I will but preſent you with the inſtances of holy *David* in the Old Teſtament, and gracious *Paul* in the New, and ſo quit this head. I need not, I ſuppoſe, magnify the holy and divine frame of *David*'s ſpirit by any rhetoric of mine; GOD himſelf hath given the ampleſt teſtimony, and faireſt character of him that I remember to have been at any time given of any man, when he owns him for *a man after his own heart*: and what a longing, thirſting ſoul this was, I need do no more to demonſtrate than to turn you to ſome paſſages and profeſſions of his own in his devout Pſalms, ſuch as *Pſalm* xlii. 12. lxiii. 1. cxliii. 6. where he borrows the ſtrongeſt inclinations that are to be found in the whole creation, to repreſent the devout ardors of his own ſoul; *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God. O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek*

I ſeek thee; my ſoul thirſteth for thee; my fleſh longeth for thee in a dry and thirſty land, where no water is. I ſtretch forth my hands unto thee; my ſoul thirſteth after thee, as a thirſty land: yea, he ſeems like one that would ſwoon away for very longing: *Hear me ſpeedily, O Lord, my ſpirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, leſt I be like unto them that go down into the pit; I lift up my ſoul unto thee; I flee unto thee, &c.* The very ſame temper you will find in holy *Paul*, that choſen veſſel of GOD, if you peruſe his Epiſtles, in all which you will meet with devout and ſtrong breathings of the ſame kind; particularly *Phil.* iii. 11, 12, 13, 14. where he ſeems to be ſo thirſty after a ſtate of heavenly perfection, that he longs after, if I miſtake not the meaning of the eleventh verſe, ſomething that yet he knows he cannot arrive at whilſt he is in this world, even the reſurrection of the dead, or ſuch a perfect ſtate of purity and holineſs, as belongs to the children of the reſurrection.

5*thly*, "THE godly ſoul thirſteth no more after "happineſs in any creature, nor reſts in any world-"ly thing, but in GOD alone." This particular conſiſts alſo of two branches: the former and negative part whereof ſeems to me to contain in it the ſcope and meaning of our SAVIOUR, in theſe words which I am now interpreting. We have already ſeen that every unſanctified ſoul is reſtleſs, and craving, wavering, unſatisfied, inconſtant to itſelf, and its choice: by reaſon of its natural activity, it is always ſpending itſelf in reſtleſs and giddy

motions, as we obſerved under the firſt head of this diſcourſe; but by reaſon of its ignorance, and unacquaintedneſs with the one ſupreme and all-ſufficient good, and the multiplicity of lower ends and objects, it is miſerably diſtracted, and doth neceſſarily grapple with inevitable diſturbances, in a continual unſteadineſs, putting forth itſelf now towards one thing, anon to another, courting every thing, but matching with nothing; like a fickle lover, that is always enamoured with the laſt feature he ſaw; or a greedy merchant, that being equally in love with the pleaſure of being at home, and the profit of being abroad, can ſtay long no where with any content, but has always moſt mind of the place where he is not, as he confeſſes of himſelf in the Poet,

Romæ Tyhur ame ventoſus, Tyhure Romam.

THE deſcription that our LORD gives of the unclean ſpirit that is *gone out of a man*, Matt. xii. 43. ſeems very aptly to agree unto that unclean ſpirit that is in man, that being departed from GOD its proper reſt and habitation, walketh through dry and deſart places, I mean, empty and unſatisfying creature-enjoyments, ſeeking reſt but finding none. It was an accidental affliction of believers, but it is the natural and neceſſary affliction of every unbelieving and wicked ſoul, to wander up and down the world deſtitute, afflicted, tormented. Sinful ſelf is ſo multiform, and that one root, the animal life, has ſuch a world of branches, that it is impoſſible to adminiſter due nouriſhment to them all;

and yet they are all importunate and greedy ſuckers too: ſo that he muſt needs have a difficult taſk, and a painful province, that is conſtrained to attend upon ſo many, ſo different, and yet all of them ſo impatient and imperious maſters. But I ſhall loſe ground by thus going backward to what I ſpoke to under the ſecond head, except I can make this advantage of it, to enforce that which I was going to ſpeak of, with the greater ſtrength and clearer evidence. The caſe ſtanding thus with the unregenerate ſoul, as we have ſeen in this ſhort review, I now ſay, that divine grace allays the multifarious thirſt of the ſoul after other waters, filthy puddles, of which it could never yet drink deep, or if it drunk never ſo deep, could not be quenched; it determines the ſoul to one object, which before was rent in pieces amongſt many. It does not deſtroy any of the natural powers, nor dry up the innate vigour of the ſoul, as I made evident under the laſt head, but it takes it off from the chaſe of all inferior ends, and inadequate objects, ſetting it upon a vehement purſuit of, and cauſing it to ſpend all thoſe its powers not leſs vigorouſly, but far more rationally and ſatisfactorily upon that *objectum par amori*, the infinitely amiable and ſelf-ſufficient GOD. When the ſoul hath once met with this glorious object, is once maſtered with this ſupreme good, is, by divine grace, ampliated and enlarged, it cannot, with any eaſe, ſtretch itſelf upon the creature any more; that is too ſcant and inſufficient for it. Certainly the ſoul that underſtands its own origi-

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nal, nature, and capacity, and once comes to view itſelf in GOD, will ſee itſelf too large to be bounded by the narrow confines of ſelf, or any creature, and too free to be bound down and chained to any earthly object whatever. The world indeed may, yea, and will labour to take off the ſoul; *What is thy Beloved more than another beloved*, that thou art ſo fond of him? *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damaſcus, better than all the waters of Iſrael?* Be content, here is hay and provender; ſtay with me this night; let us dally and make merry together a little longer. But theſe Syrenian ſongs are ſung to a deaf ear; they cannot inchant the wiſe and devout ſoul that hath her ſenſes rightly awakened, and exerciſed to diſcern between good and evil: O no, *I am ſick of love*, and ſick of every thing that keeps me from my Beloved; and therefore, however you may go about to defile me thro' fraud or force, through ſurprize or violence, yet I will not proſtitute myſelf unto you. The gracious ſoul hath now diſcovered the moſt beautiful, perfect, and lovely object, even him whoſe name is love itſelf; which glorious viſion hath ſo blaſted and withered the choiceſt flowers in nature's garden, that they have now no more form nor comelineſs, beauty, or fragrancy, as to deſerve to be deſired; ſhe hath taſted the pure and perfect ſweetneſs of the fountain, which hath ſo imbittered all ciſtern-waters, that ſhe finds no more thirſtings in herſelf after them; which is that which our SAVIOUR promiſeth here, *ſhall never thirſt*. A godly man

man cannot poſſibly be put off with any thing ſhort of GOD; give him his GOD, or he dies; give him never ſo much fair uſage in the world, never ſo much of earthly accommodations, they are not accommodated to his wants and thirſts, if they have not that GOD in them out of whom all worldly pleaſures are even irkſome and unpleaſant, and all fleſhly eaſe is tedious and painful: creature-employments are but a weariſome drudgery to a ſoul that is acquainted with the work of angels; and creature-enjoyments, in themſelves conſidered, are very inſignificant, if not burdenſome, to a mind that is feelingly poſſeſſed of the chiefeſt good.

BUT here it will be ſeaſonable to take into conſideration a grand inquiry, *viz.* Whether a godly man may not be ſaid in ſome ſenſe to deſire the creature, and how far ſuch a perſon may be ſaid to thirſt after it. This I ſhall ſpeak to as briefly, and yet as clearly as I can, in theſe four following particulars.

1. "ALL godly ſouls are not equally mortified "to worldly loves, nor equally zealous and im- "portunate lovers of GOD." This is ſo evident, *de facto*, that I need not inſiſt upon it. *Abraham* ſeems to have been as much higher and nobler in ſpirit than his brother *Lot*, as *Lot* was more excellent than one of the ordinary ſons of *Adam*, I had almoſt ſaid, than one of the Sodomites amongſt whom he dwelt. The one leaves all the pleaſant and plentiful accommodations of his native country, at the very firſt call going out, not knowing whither

whither he went, only relying upon the gracious guidance of him whom he followed; he ſeems to reckon all ſoils alike for his ſojourning, and the whole habitable world as his own city and home, as appears by his readineſs to break up houſe, and quit his preſent habitation, rather than interfere with the conveniences of his nephew, *Gen.* xiii. 9. The other preferred a fruitful ſoil before a faithful ſociety, and ſo in ſome ſenſe his body before his ſoul; and yet, as if it had not been enough to make ſo unadviſed a choice, he reſts in it too; yea, though he was ſo ſeverely reproved by the captivity that befel him there, whereby he was not ſo much called, as indeed carried away thence, yet this will not looſen him from his earthly conveniences, but he returns to *Sodom*, and from thence he will not part till he be fired out, nay, and then alſo it is with much lingering and lothneſs, *Gen.* xix. 16. It is evident I ſay, *de facto*, both from this and many other inſtances which I purpoſely omit, that it is ſo, that all godly ſouls are not equally careleſs of theſe earthly things, nor carried out with equal ardor and intemperance, as I may call it, towards the ſupreme and moſt glorious object; of which I can aſſign no fitter reaſon than this, becauſe they are not all equally godly. For,

2. "So far as grace prevails, and religion in the "power of it acteth the ſoul in which it is plant-"ed, ſo far earthly loves decay and wither." For theſe two cannot ſtand together, *mutuo ſe pellunt*, the love of the world is inconſiſtent with the love

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of GOD, 1 *John* i. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* So far as any ſoul is ſanctified, ſo far is it mortified alſo to all creature-enjoyments, to all things that are only fuel for the animal life, honour, eaſe, victory, plenty, liberty, relations, recreations, all the entertainments and delights in this lower life, yea, and this very life itſelf. Earthly and heavenly loves are to each other as the two ends of a pair of balances, ſave that they are never found equally poizing, as the one riſes the other falls; juſt ſo much advantage as this gets, that loſes. The more the ſenſual and ſelf-central life thrives and proſpers, and the creature is exalted, the more religion and the divine life faint and flag in the ſoul: and ſo certainly, on the other hand, the more divine grace prevails, and the divine life flouriſheth in the ſoul, the more all earthly objects wither away and loſe their beauty, and the ſoul cooleth and languiſheth as to its love and deſire of them. So far as a regenerate ſoul is unregenerate, ſo far ſhe will be buſtling after other lovers: which regeneration will not, I conceive, be thoroughly perfected, and therefore theſe luſtings not utterly extinguiſhed, till this mortal put on immortality; or, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks elſewhere, till *mortality be ſwallowed up of life.*

3. FOR the preventing of raſh and uncharitable judging, I do affirm, that "divine and holy ſouls "are often miſtaken by them that behold their "ordinary converſe and actions in the body." They are thought ſometimes to take pleaſure in

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the creature, and to gratify the fleſh, when indeed it is no ſuch matter; but they take pleaſure in the ſtamp of GOD, or the evidence of his fatherly love, which they contemplate therein, and do perhaps, moſt of all, ſerve a ſpiritual end, and an eternal deſign in thoſe very actions which others may think are calculated for the gratification of the animal life, and the ſervice of the fleſh. Let not the purblind world, nor the ſelf-befriending hypocrite, be judge, and it will appear that the truly godly ſoul counts nothing ſavoury to itſelf, but what repreſents, teaches, exhibits ſomething of GOD, nothing pleaſant but what hath a tendency to him: ſuch a man doth not feel himſelf in his higheſt raptures, doth not taſte himſelf in his nobleſt accompliſhments, doth not ſeek himſelf in his moſt excellent performances; be not miſtaken, he doth not ſo much thirſt after long life, riches, friends, liberties, as indeed after GOD in them all; theſe all ſignify nothing to him, if they bring him not nearer to his GOD, and conduce to his real and ſpiritual happineſs. Yea, poſſibly, in his moſt ſuſpicable actions, and thoſe that ſeem moſt alien from religion, and moſt deſigned to pleaſe the fleſh, he may be highly ſpiritual and pure: ſo was our bleſſed SAVIOUR we know, even in his converſing with ſcandalous ſinners, eating and drinking with Publicans, and notorious offenders, however he was traduced by a proud and hypocritical generation; and ſo I doubt not is many a good Chriſtian, according to his meaſure, pure as CHRIST was pure. When

a painted hypocrite, who can gueſs at the temper of others no other way but by what he finds in himſelf, and by what he ſhould be and do, if he were under the ſame circumſtances, comes to be judge of the actions or diſpoſition of one who is transformed into the image of the divine freedom and benignity, you may eaſily imagine what a perverſe ſentence he will paſs. It needs not ſeem very ſtrange, methinks, in ſpirituals, no more than it is in corporals, that the moſt ſound and healthful conſtitutions ſhould, upon a lawful call, adventure themſelves further than the crazy, and ſickly, and familiarly converſe with and handle, yea, and make good work with thoſe briers and thorns, which would prove a ſnare, or a wound, or a pricking temptation to others. If it were poſſible for any man to arrive at the purity and perfection of his SAVIOUR, and his firm and immoveable radication in true goodneſs, he would find himſelf ſo wholly dead to ſin, and all temptations, and motions thereunto, that he would be able to dare to walk upon the moſt boiſterous waves, without fear of being ſwallowed up in them, and to take up in his hands the moſt venemous ſerpent, not dreading the ſting of it. However, the apprehenſions and actions of more perfect and refined ſouls are not raſhly to be judged; for they may eaſily be miſtaken, either by the unhallowed hypocrite, or the more imperfect and impotent ſaint.

4. To anſwer yet more fully, I do affirm, that "no truly religious ſoul in the world doth ſo thirſt

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" after the creature, as to place its main happi-
" neſs in it, or to ſeek ſatisfaction from it." However all holy ſouls may not be alike weaned from the world, nor equally loving of GOD, however the affections and actions of ſome may really be, and of others may ſeem to be too groſs and fleſhly, yet no one of all theſe, in whom this new and divine life is indeed found, doth erect a ſelf-ſupremacy in his own ſoul, nor take his full and complete reſt and happineſs to conſiſt in any creature-communion whatſoever. Surely this of not thirſting is ſo far a conſequent of true religion, as that no religious ſoul in the world can be content to exchange the preſence of GOD, and acquaintance with him, for any thing, for all things beſides; or, if you will, plainly thus; no ſuch perſon could be content, no, not for all the world, the glory of heaven not excepted, if it may be ſuppoſed, to be wicked and ungodly: ſo that by thirſting here muſt not be meant ſome weak wiſhings, and fainter propenſions of the ſoul towards created objects; for certainly there is no ſoul found in a body of earth, in which theſe are not found, no, nor yet ſome more lively and ſtronger ſtrugglings after them, (how ſtrong they may be in a good Chriſtian, and yet predominated over by grace, we cannot punctually determine;) but, by thirſting here, muſt be meant the moſt quick and powerful breathings, the higheſt and ſtrongeſt ardencies, the predominant and victorious motions and deſires of the ſoul, which do, as it were, ſold up the whole ſoul, and lead all

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its powers and faculties with it into a grateful captivity. Thus ſhall he thirſt no more, who hath once drunk of theſe waters which flow forth from the preſence of the LORD of life, and which the bleſſed REDEEMER of the world is here ſaid to give.

BUT, which is the latter branch of this particular, this inſpired ſoul which we have been deſcribing, thirſteth after his happineſs in GOD alone, that is, in the enjoyment of him. We have already ſeen that grace does not deſtroy the natural and eſſential longings of the ſoul after a ſatisfactory good, but rather enhance them, and that the godly ſoul is moſt thirſty of all, but not with a creature-thirſt, as is before proved; it remains then, that his thirſting after reſt and happineſs is terminated upon GOD alone. And ſo indeed it appears in the inſtances of holy men recorded in holy writ, which I have under the laſt head ſpoke ſomething to, and ſo partly prevented myſelf. But unto thoſe paſſages and profeſſions which I quoted out of *Pſalm* xlii. 1, 2, *&c.* you may add ſuch as *Pſalm* iv. 6. which is the voice of every godly ſoul; *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us:* Pſalm xxxix. 6, 7. *Surely every man walketh in a vain ſhew; ſurely they are diſquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, &c. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee:* where you have the different ſeekings and centrings of the ungodly, and of the godly ſoul, elegantly deſcribed. Laſtly, You may, in *Pſalm* lxxiii. 25. again view the term or end of the godly man's

man's ambition; *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee!* Which tranſlation of the words doth livelily ſet out the godly man's end, and aim, and object, and happineſs, and indeed his all: or, if we tranſlate, perhaps more fitly, with *Mollerus*, yet they afford us the ſame doctrine, *Who will give me to be in heaven and with thee? on earth I deſire nothing.*

And thus have we diſpatched the fifth propoſition, *viz.* that the godly ſoul thirſteth no more after happineſs in any creature, or reſt in any worldly thing; and come to the ſixth and laſt particular deſigned for the explication of this not thirſting of the religious ſoul, which is this.

In the enjoyment of God, this ſoul is at reſt, is fully ſatisfied. I do not mean ſo ſatisfied as not to thirſt after any more of him, as I have often hinted; but ſo ſatisfied, as to be perfectly matched with an object tranſcendently adequate to all its faculties, and their reſpective capacities; and ſo ſatisfied as to have peace, and joy, and triumph in him. Theſe two I will ſpeak ſomething to diſtinctly, and ſo paſs on.

Now, for the better underſtanding of the firſt of theſe it ſhould be noted, that the reaſonable ſoul and the faculties of it are of a vaſt, large, and noble capacity. It is univerſally granted by all that are not Sadducees, that the capacity of angels is very great and noble; and that the condition of the human ſoul is not much inferior to it, may, I think, be gathered from the Pſalmiſt's words, *Pſal.* viii. 5.

viii. 5. *Thou haſt made him a little lower than the angels:* which words, although the author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* applies to CHRIST, *Heb.* ii. 9. and indeed they have a marvelous aptneſs to him, according to the *Dutch* tranſlation, which runs thus, *We ſee Jeſus crowned with glory and honour, who was become a little leſſer than the angels, by reaſon of the ſufferings of death; that he ſhould, by the grace of God, &c.* Yet I ſee nothing hindering but that they may be well applied to the excellent condition of man by creation; eſpecially conſidering that many other paſſages of the Old Teſtament have a double aſpect, one more ordinary and obvious, which was moſt clearly underſtood by the Prophet that wrote them; the other more abſtruſe and myſterious, principally intended by that Spirit that inſpired him, and only to be underſtood by the revelation of the ſame Spirit: ſuch are thoſe paſſages, I conceive, which are found in *Iſa.* vii. 14. *Hoſea* xi. 1. interpreted by the Evangeliſt, *Matt.* i. 23. and ii. 15. as alſo *Jer.* xxxi. 15. with many more. But however it goes with that text, and whether or no the ſouls of men be ſo near of kindred to the angels, as to their own comprehenſions; yet, that they are capable of a moſt noble and excellent happineſs, and much allied to GOD himſelf, doth appear from ſuch texts of ſcripture as doth require them to be *holy as God is holy*; to be *perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect.* Neither need it ſeem to any incredible, that the rational ſoul ſhould be ſo capacious; for we are no more

more to judge of the angelical temper, and noble actings of the ſeparated ſoul, by what we ſee it to be and do in this body of fleſh, than one can judge of the proweſs and puiſſance of a renowned warrior at the head of an army, by what we diſcern in him when he lies bound in chains, or of the power and ſplendor of the ſun, by what we diſcern of it when it is eclipſed, or miſerably beclouded; or, if you will, no more than we can judge of a man by the imperfections, ſtammerings, and weakneſs of his childhood: for ſo the Apoſtle *Paul* ſeems to ſtate the caſe, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 10, 11. plainly implying, that the preſent and future condition of the ſoul is comparable to the minority and adult ſtate of a man; as if he had ſaid, "the ſoul, in its fu-"ture and ſeparate ſtate, will act as much nobler "than what it doth now, as the ſoul of the wiſeſt "and diſcreeteſt man in the world acteth more "nobly than what it did when he was a child:" yea, and what is ſtill more to our preſent purpoſe, he ſeems clearly to intimate in the twelfth verſe, that this improvement ſhall happen, not ſo much by the more evident propounding of the object, as by the more ample illumination and corroboration of the faculties. In the next place it will be eaſily inferred, that all created good is too ſcant and inſufficient for this capacious ſpirit of man; too ſhort a bed to ſtretch itſelf upon; nay, it cannot contract itſelf ſo as to be accommodated to any worldly good, without pain and anguiſh. From both which it will be naturally and neceſſarily concluded, that

God

God alone is that adequate object which can match the ſoul of man, and ſatisfy it, as being infinitely ſuperior and tranſcendent to it. The enjoyment of God is that ultimate end, and perfect good that is only able to fix the ſpirit of man; which otherwiſe, not meeting with its match, would be toſſed to and fro, and labour under perpetual diſquietude and reſtleſs fluctuations. God is that almighty goodneſs and ſweetneſs, who alone is able to draw out all the appetites of the ſoul unto himſelf, ſatisfy all its cravings, charm all its reſtleſs motions, and cauſe all its faculties, in the pureſt and moſt complacential manner, to conſpire together to give up themſelves wholly and entirely to himſelf.

Secondly, From this conjunction with omnipotent goodneſs, ariſeth pure peace, yea, joy and triumph, to the religious ſoul. For the clearer underſtanding of this I ſhould premiſe, what ſome have wiſely obſerved, that there is a natural congruity between God and the ſoul, ſhe being a ſpiritual ſubſtance, and he being a ſpiritual good, only ſuitable unto her. This ſeems to be evident by experience; for we ſee how difficult, I had almoſt ſaid, impoſſible it is, utterly to eradicate and extinguiſh all ſenſe of virtue and goodneſs out of the ſoul of man; to which purpoſe I think our divines generally ſpeak, when they allow of ſome holy relics, ſomething of the image of God remaining in the moſt degenerate ſouls, however all men have reduced the ſame to a very poor and inconſiderable ſpark, and many have raked that very

ſpark

ſpark under aſhes too, and impriſoned that remainder of truth in unrighteouſneſs, living according to thoſe unnatural and foreign principles and conceptions that they have unhappily drunk in. Hence it is, I ſuppoſe, that ſin and wickedneſs are ſo often ſtiled the defilement of the ſoul: now, we know, that whatſoever defileth, is adventitious and improper; and hence it is, that ſin many times ſtings and wounds the conſciences of thoſe that take moſt pleaſure in it, namely, being ſo perfectly contrary to this noble and inbred ſenſe of the ſoul; allowing, then, this natural ſympathy that the ſoul of man hath with its Creator, it will be eaſy to give a philoſophical account of that peace, joy, and triumph, of which the ſoul muſt needs be poſſeſſed, or rather indeed tranſported with, that finds and feels itſelf in conjunction with its centre, and in the deareſt embraces of its Creator. It need not ſeem ſtrange, that the ſoul ſhould mightily congratulate itſelf in its arrival at its own haven; nay, it were ſtrange if it ſhould not diſſolve into ſecret joy and pleaſure in the hearty entertainment of ſo bleſſed and proper a gueſt as GOD is unto it; nay, indeed it were unreaſonable to imagine, that the conjunction of ſuch noble and diſcerning faculties with ſo perfect and proper an object, ſhould not beget the trueſt and ſincereſt delight and pleaſure imaginable. The delights of an earthly and ſenſual mind are filthy and dreggy, in compariſon of theſe pleaſures of the refined and purified ſoul, which muſt needs live moſt gracefully, triumphantly, and

deliciouſly, when it converſeth with GOD moſt intimately. Certainly if there be any innocent and well-natured ſelf-feeling, or ſelf-pleaſing, in the world, this is it; though indeed to ſpeak truly, it deſerves a better name. It cannot be but that a godly ſoul, being in its right ſenſes, ſhould taſte a ſweetneſs in theſe pure and divine accompliſhments wrought in it by the eternal Spirit of righteouſneſs; which ſelf-pleaſing is no more blameable, than that natural pleaſure which every creature finds in the enjoyment of that which is moſt aptly accommodated to its neceſſities, and moſt perfective of its happineſs; which pleaſure, I ſay, ariſeth in the ſoul from its ſenſible union with GOD in the ſpirit, and enjoyment of him: by which enjoyment of GOD, you will eaſily perceive that I do not mean the bare pardon of ſin, or an abſtract juſtification; for this is not the attainment that is perfective of the ſoul, neither could it alone, if we could ſuppoſe it alone, fill up the capacities of the ſoul, or make it happy, however the rapturous joys of the unprincipled hypocrite ſpring principally from the opinion and falſe apprehenſion of this; which indeed I take to be a notable, though not infallible, ſign of a mercenary, low-ſpirited, and fleſhly-minded Chriſtian: but by it I mean the ſoul's being really regenerated into the image of GOD, conſiſting in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and her implantation into the root CHRIST JESUS, by which ſhe partakes of his divine life, power, and Spirit.

And yet, beſides this, I conceive there is a more theological account to be given of theſe joys and pleaſures which the renewed ſoul doth ſo plentifully reap upon her return to God, from whom ſhe had ſo long ſtraggled by ſin and wickedneſs. For the *God of hope filleth* the godly ſoul *with all peace and joy in believing*, Rom. xv. 13. Christ doth on purpoſe ſpeak words to the hearts of his diſciples, that *their joy may be full*, John xv. 11. But whether the moſt benign and gracious Father of ſpirits doth immediately from himſelf inſpire the holy ſoul with divine joys and pleaſures, kindled, as I may ſay, with nothing but his own breath; or whether he bring them to his holy mountain, and into his houſe of prayer, and by that, or any other the like means, make them joyful, and of glad heart, as in the day of a ſolemn feſtival, as he hath promiſed to do, *Iſa.* lvi. 7. and *Iſa.* xxv. 6. however it be, I ſay, ſure it is that he frequently puts a gladneſs into their hearts beyond that of the harveſt or the vintage, *Pſal.* iv. 7. and makes them to rejoice with *joy unſpeakable and full of glory*, 1 Peter i. 8.

Having now unfolded the meaning of the gracious ſoul's not thirſting any more, I ſhould paſs to the laſt thing contained in the text; but finding myſelf oppreſſed in my ſpirit by the conſideration of this neceſſary conſequent of true religion, when I compare the temper of Chriſtians with it, ὀΐοι νῦν βροτοί εἰσι, I muſt crave leave to ſtay a little and breathe. And what ſhall I breathe but a ſad

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and bitter complaint over that low, earthly, ſelfiſh, greedy ſpirit which actuateth the world at this day, yea, and the generality of the profeſſors of that ſacred religion which we call Chriſtianity. Alas! what a company of thieves and murderers, I mean, baſe and ſenſual loves and luſts, lodge in thoſe very ſouls who would be taken for temples conſecrated to the name, and honour, and inhabitation of the eternal GOD, the Spirit of truth and holineſs. O what pity is it that the precious ſouls of men, yea, and of Chriſtians, the beſt of men, that are all capable of ſo glorious a liberty, ſo high and honourable a happineſs, ſhould be bound down under ſuch vile and ſordid luſts, feeding upon duſt and gravel, to whom the hidden Manna is freely offered, and GOD himſelf is ready to become a banquet! And O what a ſhame is it for thoſe who profeſs themſelves children of GOD, diſciples of the moſt holy JESUS, and heirs of his pure and undefiled kingdom of heaven; for theſe, I ſay, willingly and greedily to roll themſelves in filthy and brutiſh ſenſualities, to ſet up that on high in their ſouls, which was made to be under their bodies, and ſo to love and live as if they ſtudied to have no affinity at all, but would be as unlike as they could to that GOD, and REDEEMER, and unfit for that inheritance! How often ſhall it be proteſted to the Chriſtian world, by men of the greateſt devotion and ſerioufneſs, that it is utterly mad, and perfectly vain, to dream of entering into the kingdom of heaven hereafter, except the kingdom of heaven enter into our ſouls

during their union with theſe bodies? How long ſhall the Son of GOD, who came into the world on purpoſe to be the moſt glorious example of true and divine purity, exact and perfect ſelf-denial, and mortification, how long ſhall he lie by in his word as an antiquated pattern only cut out for the apoſtolical ages of the world, and only ſuited to ſome few moroſe and melancholic men? Is it not a monſtrous ſpectacle, and to be hiſſed out of the world with the greateſt indignation, a covetous, voluptuous, ambitious, ſenſual ſaint? With what face can we pretend to true religion, or a feeling acquaintance with GOD, and the things of his perſonal ſervice and kingdom, whilſt the continual bleatings and lowings of our ſouls after created good do bewray us ſo manifeſtly, and proclaim before all the world that the beaſt, the brutiſh life, is ſtill powerful in us? *If ye ſeek me*, ſaith CHRIST to his followers, as well as he did once to his perſecutors, *then let theſe go*; let go the hold of theſe earthly objects, let vaniſh theſe worldly joys and toys; *withhold your throat from thirſt, and your feet from being unſhod*, and come follow me only, and ye ſhall have treaſure in heaven; for he that will not deny all for me, is not worthy of me. But, *O curvæ in terras animæ*, &c. Ah ſad and dreadful fall, that hath ſo miſerably cramped this royal offspring, and made the King's ſon to be a lame *Mephiboſheth!* Ah doleful apoſtaſy! How are the ſons of the morning become brats of darkneſs, and the heirs of heaven vaſſals and drudges to earth! How

How is the King's daughter unequally yoked with a churliſh *Nabal*, that continually checketh her more divine and generous motions! *How unhappily art thou matched, O my ſoul!* And yet, alas! I ſee it is too properly a marriage; for thou haſt clean forgotten *thine own people, and thy Father's houſe.* Take up, O take up a lamentation, thou virgin, daughter of the GOD of *Zion*; ſometimes indeed a virgin, but now, alas! no longer a virgin, but miſerably married to an unworthy mate, that can never be able ſo match thy faculties, nor maintain thee according to the grandeur of thy birth, or the neceſſary pomp of thy expences, and way of living; nay, thou art become not only a miſerable wife, but, in ſo being, thou art alſo a wicked adultereſs, proſtituting thyſelf to the very vileſt of thy lawful huſband's ſervants: if thou be not inceſtuous, it is no thank to thee, there being nothing in this world ſo near of kin to thee, as to make way for inceſt. *Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return; put away thine adulteries from between thy breaſts, and ſo ſhall the king yet again greatly deſire thy beauty*; for ſo he hath promiſed, *Jer.* iii. 21. that when there ſhall be a voice heard upon the high places, weeping, and ſupplications of the children of *Iſrael*, becauſe they have perverted their way, and forgotten the LORD their GOD, and the backſliding children ſhall return, that then he *will heal their backſlidings.*

CHAP. VIII.

The term or end of religion, eternal life, considered in a double notion: First, as it signifies the essential happiness of the soul. The second, as it takes in many glorious appendixes. The former more fully described; the latter more briefly. The noble and genuine breathings of the godly soul after, and springing up into the former; in what sense she may be said to desire the latter. The argument drawn from the example of CHRIST. *Moses and* Paul *moderated. A general answer given to the query. It ends in a serious exhortation made to Christians, to live and love more spiritually, more suitably to the nature of souls, redeemed souls, resulting from the whole discourse.*

I AM now come to the last thing whereby this most noble principle is described, *viz.* the term or end of it; and that is said here in the text to be *everlasting life*. This is the ἀκμὴ τῆς ἡλικίας, or highest pitch of perfection, unto which the new creature is continually growing up; which the Apostle *Paul* hath expressed with as much grand eloquence as words are able to magnify it, calling it μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*: this is that unbounded ocean which this living fountain, by so many incessant issues, and unwearied streamings, perpetually endeavours to empty itself into, or rather

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to unbosom itself in. Now what this is, we must confess with the Apostle *John*, and indeed we have more reason to make such a confession than he had, that it doth not yet appear, *viz.* neither fully nor distinctly: but yet, since I am thus cast upon the contemplation of it, it will be a pertinent piece of pleasure a little to enquire into it; and though it surpass the power and skill of all created comprehensions to take the just dimensions, and faithfully give in the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of it; yet we may essay to walk about this heavenly *Jerusalem*, as the Psalmist speaks of the earthly, *and tell the towers thereof, mark her walls, consider her palaces*, that we may tell it to the generation following.

1. THEN we will consider *eternal life* in the most proper notion of it, as it implies the essential happiness of the soul; and so it is no other than the soul's pure, perfect, and established state. By a state I do designedly disparage that grosser notion of a place, as that which scarce deserves to enter into the description of such a glory, or, at best, will obtain but a very low room there: by purity I do purposely explode that carnal ease, rest, immunity, affluence of sensual delights, accommodated only to the animal life; which last *Mahometans*, and the former too many professed Christians, and the *Jews* almost, generally do dream of, and judge heaven to be. By perfection I do distinguish it from the best state which the best men upon earth can possibly be in. So then I take eternal life in

the primary and moſt proper notion of it to be full, and perfect, and everlaſting enjoyment of GOD, communion with him, and a moſt bliſsful conformity of all the powers and faculties of the ſoul to that eternal goodneſs, truth, and love, as far as it is or may become capable of the communications of the divinity. This life was, at the higheſt rate imaginable, purchaſed by our ever bleſſed LORD and SAVIOUR in the days of his fleſh, and here in the text promiſed to every believing ſoul. Now, inaſmuch as we are ignorant both of the preſent capacity of our own faculties, how large they are, and much more ignorant how much more large and ample they may be made, on purpoſe to receive the more rich and plentiful communications of the divine life and image, therefore can we not comprehend either the tranſcendent life, happineſs, and glory, or that degree of ſanctity and bleſſedneſs which the believing ſoul may be advanced unto in another world. The Popiſh ſchoolmen nicely diſpute about the ſight of GOD, and the love of GOD, to wit, in whether of theſe the formal bleſſedneſs of the ſoul conſiſteth, ill ſeparating thoſe whom GOD hath ſo firmly joined together, as if it were poſſible that either a blind love, or a jejune and unaffectionate ſpeculation, could render a ſoul entirely happy: but it is much ſafer to ſay, that the happineſs and eternal life of the ſoul ſtandeth in the poſſeſſion or fruition of GOD; and this doth neceſſarily import the proper perfection of every faculty. Nothing can be the formal happineſs of

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a spirit that is either inferior or extrinsical to it; it must be something divine, and that wrought into the very nature and temper of it. I doubt not to affirm, that if the soul of man were possibly advanced, so as to receive adoration or divine power, yet if it were in the mean time void of divine dispositions, and a god-like nature; it were far from being glorified, and made happy as to its capacity. What health is to the body, that is holiness to the soul; which haply the Apostle alludes to when he speaks of the *spirit of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. i. 7.

2. THERE is another notion of *eternal life* which some contend for, by which they mean not barely the essential happiness of the soul, but that with the addition of many suitable and glorious circumstances, the essential happiness of the soul, as it is attended with the appendixes of a glorified body, the beholding of CHRIST, the amicable society of angels, freedom from temptations, the knowledge of the secrets of nature and providence, and some such like: to which may be also added, though of a lower degree, open absolution, or a visible deliverance of the saints out of the overthrow of the wicked at the conflagration of the world, power over devils, eminence of place, enjoyment of friends, and some other like. Now let us briefly consider what tendencies there are in the religious soul towards each of these: and here I must crave leave to speak jointly both of the end, and of the motion thereunto; though it may be thought that the

former only falls fairly under our preſent conſideration.

First then, I ſuppoſe that *eternal life* in the firſt ſenſe of it is intended here, to wit, the eſſential happineſs of the ſoul, or its perfect and everlaſting enjoyment of God. For the deſcription is here made of religion itſelf in the abſtract, or that principle of divine life which Christ Jesus implanted in the ſoul; and being ſo conſidered, it is hard to conceive how that ſhould ſpring up into any of theſe appendant circumſtances, or into any thing but the completion and perfection of itſelf; though the religious ſoul, taken in the concrete, poſſibly may. And indeed though we ſhould allow, which we ſhall take into conſideration under the next head, that many of thoſe high ſcriptural phraſes which are brought to deſcribe the future condition of believing ſouls, do principally reſpect the appendixes of its eſſential happineſs, (as a kingdom, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, an inheritance reſerved, a place prepared, and the like) yet it ſeems very unnatural to interpret this phraſe, *life*, and *eternal life*, any otherwiſe than of that which I call the eſſential happineſs of the ſoul: but if we interpret it of this, the ſenſe is very fair and eaſy; thus this principle of divine life is continually endeavouring to grow up to its juſt altitude, to advance itſelf unto a triumphant ſtate, even as all other principles of life do naturally tend towards a final accompliſhment, and ultimate perfection. Carnal ſelf, or the animal life, may be indeed

indeed said to be a well of water too, poisonous water; but that springs up into a sensual life, popular applause, self-accommodations; or if you will in the Apostle's phrase, into the fulfilment of the lusts of the flesh. This I speak only by way of illustratory opposition: for, to speak more properly, this corrupt principle hath in it the central force of death and hell, and is always tumbling downward; whereas this divine principle is always climbing upward: but they do both agree in this, that they do both seek their own gratifications, and study to acquire their respective perfections. The everlasting and most glorious enjoyment of GOD is certainly most perfective of the soul; and therefore is most properly and most deservingly said to be its *eternal life*, according to that of our SAVIOUR, *John* xvii. 3. Now this *eternal life* is not a thing specifically different from religion, or the image of GOD, or the divine life, but indeed the greatest height, and the most possible perfection of itself: even as the sun at noon-day is not a light really distinct from what it was in the first dawnings of the morning, but a different degree, and far more glorious state; which seems to be the very similitude whereby the Spirit of GOD illustrateth the matter in hand, *Prov.* iv. 18. or, as a man of perfect age is not a distinct species from a child, but much more complete and excellent in that species; to which the Apostle refers, treating of this subject, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 11. Man hath not two distinct kinds of happiness in the two distinct worlds, that

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he is made to live in; but one and the ſame thing is his bleſſedneſs in both, which, as I ſaid before, muſt needs be the enjoyment of GOD. The tranſlation made of the text is very ſuitable to this notion; for this divine principle is ſaid to ſpring up, not unto but into everlaſting life, *q. d.* it ſprings up till it be ſwallowed up into the perfect knowledge, love, and enjoyment of GOD. Even as youth is ſwallowed up in manhood, ſo this grace is ſwallowed up in glory, and not ſo much aboliſhed, as indeed perfected.

BY this phraſe the genius of true religion, and the excellent temper of the truly religious ſoul, is moſt livelily deſcribed. This is the ſoul that, being in ſome meaſure delivered from its unnatural bondage, and freed from its unhappy confinement, now ſpreads itſelf in GOD, lifts up itſelf unto him, ſtretches itſelf upon him, is not content with a heaven merely to come, but brings down a heaven into itſelf, by carrying up itſelf unto, and after the GOD of heaven. GOD is become great, only great in the eye of ſuch a Chriſtian; he is indeed become all things to him; whilſt this principle is rightly and actually predominant in him, he knows no intereſt but to thrive and grow great in GOD; no will, but to ſerve the will, and comply with the mind of GOD; no end, but to be united to GOD; no buſineſs, but to diſplay and reflect the glory and perfections of GOD upon the earth; the main buſineſs of his life, I ſay, is to ſerve him, the main ambition of his ſoul to be like unto him, and his

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main happineſs in this world to be united to him, and in the world to come, to be ſwallowed up in him; in this world to know, and love, and reſt, and delight in, and enjoy GOD more than all things, and in the world to come to enjoy him more than ſo. The gladſome growings up of the tender flowers unto the friendly ſun, being once powerfully ſurprized with his precious and benign influences, and the chearful haſte with which the ſympathetic needle ſo amorouſly purſues the inchanting loadſtone, being once rightly touched and affected with it, do a little, though but a little, reſemble and repreſent the motions of a ſpirit impregnated with this divine principle, and ſtrongly impreſſed with the image and ſtamp of GOD: he puts in his hand by the hole of the door, and the bowels of the eſpouſed ſoul are preſently moved, yea, melted for him, *Cant.* v. 4. He caſts the ſkirt of his garment, the mantle of his love, and preſently the converted ſoul leaves all to follow him. Faith, hope, and love, are knitting and ſpringing graces, and this eternal life is the end and perfection of them all; not that any one of them, I conceive, ſhall be utterly incaſſated and aboliſhed, as ſome conclude concerning the two former, though without good ground, I think, from the Apoſtle's words, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 13. But faith will be ripened into the moſt firm and undiſturbed confidence, affiance, and acquieſcence in GOD; hope will be advanced into a more chearful, powerful, and confident expectation, having for its object the perpetuation of the

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ſoul's felicity; and love will become much more loving, and more clearly diſtinguiſhable from the imperfect longings and languiſhings of this preſent ſtate, when it ſhall flower up into pure delights and complacencies, reſting and glorying in the arms of its adequate, ſatisfactory, and eternal object. The faith of the hypocrite, and indeed his hope too, is ſtill ſpringing up into ſelf-preſervation, deliverance, liberty, a ſplendid and pompous ſtate of the church, (that is, of his own party) or ſome ſuch thing as will gratify the animal life, and there it terminates; but the faith of the ſincere and religious ſoul ſprings up into eternal life; it knows no term but *the ſalvation of the ſoul*, 1 Pet. i. 9. As its hope knows no accompliſhment but a ſtate of god-like purity and perfection, 1 *John* iii. 3. The mere natural man lives within himſelf, within a circle of his own, and cannot get out; whether he eat, or drink, or pray, or be zealous for the popular pulling down of the political Antichriſt, he is ſtill in his own circle, he is ſtill ſacrificing in all this to that great *belluo*, the animal life, as I have already made evident: but the godly ſoul is diſintereſted of ſelf, and ſo is ſtill contriving the advancement of a nobler life within itſelf, and moving towards GOD as its ſupreme and all-ſufficient good. Give a ſaint all that the whole world can afford, he cannot fix, nor ſettle, nor centre here: GOD hath put into him a holy reſtleſs appetite after an higher good, which he would rather be, than what he is. I know indeed that the ſoul that

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is thus divinely free may be hindered in its flight; but it will deliver itself from the clog at length: you may choke and dam up the streamings of this fountain perhaps, but they will burst out again; you may cast ashes upon this pure fire for a time, but it will flame out again; such a damp cannot arise, no not from hell itself, as to extinguish it. The Philistines, I remember, stopped the wells of water which *Abraham* had digged in *Gerar, and filled them with earth*, Gen. xxvi. 15. But this well of water which God diggeth in the holy and humble soul, cannot be stopped, neither by the devil, that king of *Gerar*, that is, of wanderings, *Job* i. 7. nor by any of his servants, but it will find vent upward: though you endeavour to fill it with earth, which indeed is the likeliest to choke it, (for *amor rerum terrenarum est viscus spiritualium pennarum*) though you cast dust and gravel of earthly pleasures, profits, or preferments into it, yet it is a well of living water, and will work its passage out. The hungerings of the godly soul are not, cannot be satisfied, till it come to feed upon the hidden Manna, nor its thirstings quenched, till it come to be swallowed up in the unbounded ocean of life and love.

But I see I cannot divide *springing up* from *eternal life*, nor pursue the term of religion, but I must also take in the motion of the religious soul, whereby it pursues it, which I have already handled in my discourse; therefore I will quit this head, and take a short view of the second.

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THE ſecondary and more improper notion of eternal life, I told you, was that which takes in the circumſtances or appendices of it. And here we muſt needs allow, that the holy ſcriptures openly avouch ſome of theſe circumſtances, as thoſe eſpecially of the firſt rank that I named, of ſome of which it ſeems to make great account; and poſſibly the ſcripture may ſomewhere or other imply all the reſt, even thoſe of the inferior rank. Again, we will allow, that many of thoſe phraſes which the ſcripture uſes to deſcribe the bleſſed ſtate of the other world, principally reſpect theſe appendices of the ſoul's eſſential happineſs: ſuch perhaps are the *crown of righteouſneſs* mentioned by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* iv. 8. *The prize of the high calling*, mentioned by the ſame Apoſtle, *Phil.* iii. 14. *The houſe which is from heaven*, ſpoken of 2 *Cor.* vi. 2. *A kingdom, an incorruptible inheritance, a place prepared, manſions, a reward, praiſe, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Peter i. 7. and that *glory, honour, and peace*, ſpoken of by the Apoſtle *Paul*, Rom. ii. 10. Theſe are all ſcripture deſcriptions of the other ſtate, and I ſuppoſe we may grant them to have a peculiar reference to this ſecondary and preter-eſſential happineſs of the ſoul: though I know not any neceſſity there is to be ſo liberal in our conceſſions; for it may be fairly ſaid concerning all, or moſt of them, that the deſign of theſe phraſes is not ſo much to eſtabliſh this leſs proper notion, or to point out to the cir-

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cumstances of the glorified state, as to insinuate how much more ample and glorious that state shall be than this in which we now are; as a prize is looked upon as somewhat more excellent than what is done or expended to acquire it, (it must needs be so esteemed by runners and wrestlers) a kingdom is a more glorious state than that of subjection, and an inheritance is incomparably more ample than the pension that is allowed the heir in his minority.

But these things being conceded, it doth not appear how far, or under what notion, the religious soul, as such, doth spring up into these additional glories, and thirst after them. I know there are many that speak very highly of these appendices, and allow the godly soul a very high and irrespective valuation of them: and this they do principally infer from the example of Christ himself, as also of *Moses* and *Paul*. Give me leave, therefore, to suggest something, not to enervate, but to moderate the argument drawn from these persons; and, after that, I shall briefly lay down what I conceive to be most scriptural and rational in this matter.

1. As for the example of Christ, it seems to make not much for them in this matter. For however the text is very plain, that *for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross*; and this joy seems plainly to be his session *at the right hand of God*, Heb. xii. 2. Yet, if by this joy we understand

derſtand a more full and glorious poſſeſſion of GOD, and a more excellent exaltation of his human nature to a more free fruition of the divine, then it cannot be applied to any thing but the ſpringing up of the gracious ſoul into its eſſential happineſs; which I have already contended for, as being the proper genius of ſuch a ſoul: or if by this joy and throne we underſtand the power that CHRIST foreſaw he ſhould be veſted with, of leading captivity captive, trampling under feet the powers of hell and darkneſs, and procuring gifts for men, which ſeems to me to be the moſt likely, then it belongs not at all to men, neither can this example be drawn into imitation.

As for the inſtance of *Moſes*, who is ſaid to have had *reſpect to the recompence of the reward*, Heb. xi. 26. It is not yet granted, that that *recompence of reward* relates principally to theſe appendants of the ſoul's eſſential happineſs, neither can it, I ſuppoſe, be evinced: but, though I ſhould alſo allow that, which I incline to do, yet all that can be inferred from it is but a reſpect that *Moſes* had, as our tranſlation well renders it, or ſome account, which he in his ſufferings made of this recompence; which was a very warrantable contemplation.

THE Apoſtle *Paul* indeed doth openly profeſs that he looked for, and deſired the coming of CHRIST from heaven, upon the account of that glorious body which he would then clothe him with, *Phil.* iii.

iii. 20, 21. and so he might sure, and yet not desire it principally and primarily, but secondarily, and with reference.

And this leads me to the general answer that I was preparing to give, which is this. Some of these circumstances which I have named, especially that of the glorified body, may be reduced to the essential happiness of the soul, or included in it, so as that the soul could not otherwise be perfectly happy. It is the vote of all divines, I think, that a Christian is not completely happy, till he consist of a soul and body both glorified. And indeed considering the dear affection, and essential aptitude that God hath planted in the human soul for a body, we cannot well conceive how she should be perfectly happy without one: and this earthly body is, alas! an unequal yoke-fellow, in which she is half stifled, and rather buried, than conveniently lodged; so that it seems necessary even to her essential happiness, that she should have some more heavenly and glorious body, wherein she may commodiously and pleasantly exert her innate powers, and whereby she may also express herself in a spiritual and nobler manner, suitable to her own natural dignity and vigour, and to her infinitely amiable and most beloved object.

Concerning the rest of the circumstances which cannot be thus reduced, I conceive that such of them as are necessary to the essential happiness of the soul, by way of subserviency, may be eyed, and desired,

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and thirſted after ſecondarily, and with reference, as I ſaid before, that is, under this notion only, as they are ſubſervient to that eſſential bleſſedneſs; I confeſs I do not underſtand under what other notion a religious ſoul can lift up itſelf unto them, I mean, not ſo far forth as it is holy and religious, and acts ſuitably to that divine principle which the FATHER of ſpirits, or rather the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST hath implanted in it. And if there be any other circumſtance which cannot be reduced to one of theſe kinds, I ſuppoſe it may be reckoned amongſt the objects and gratifications of the animal life, and not to make up any part of the godly man's heaven, or that eternal life which religion ſprings up into: for I do eaſily imagine, that a fleſhly fancy may verily be mightily raviſhed with the deſire of ſuch a heaven as is ſuitable to it; and that a mere animal man may be as heartily deſirous to be in ſuch a kingdom of GOD as he hath ſhaped out to himſelf, as he is utterly unwilling that the true kingdom of GOD (ſuch as the Apoſtle deſcribes, *Rom.* xiv. 17. conſiſting *in righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghoſt*) ſhould be in him. If our continual cry be after ſafety, ſelf-preſervation, liberty, redemption, and deliverance from thoſe things only that oppreſs and grieve our fleſhly intereſt, and our thirſtings principally terminated in knowledge, though it be of GOD himſelf, freedom from condemnation, power over devils, yea, or any viſible pomp, glory, or ſplendor, though

though it be of never so ethereal and heavenly a nature, what do we more than others? what is all this more than may naturally spring up from the animal life, and be ultimately resolved into carnal self?

WHEREFORE, as a result from the whole discourse, especially from this last part of it, let me earnestly intreat all the professors of this holy religion, which the blessed Messiah CHRIST JESUS hath so dearly bought for the world, and so clearly revealed in it, not to value themselves by any thing which the power of natural self-love may exert or desire, perform or expect, nor by any thing below the image of GOD, and the internal and transforming manifestations of CHRIST JESUS in them; the perfection of which is eternal life, in the most proper and true notion of it, as you have heard. I know that I have often suggested the same lesson in this short treatise, but I know also that I can never inculcate it often enough; nay, the eloquence of angels is not sufficient to imprint it upon the hearts of men. Possibly it may startle some hypocritical professors, and carnal gospellers, (GOD grant it may effectually!) and make the ears of many that hear it to tingle, but yet I will proclaim it, "It is possible for a man to desire not "only the things of this world, (which St *James* "speaks of, chap. iv. 3.) but even heaven itself, "to consume it upon his lusts; and he may as "truly be making provision for the flesh, to fulfil

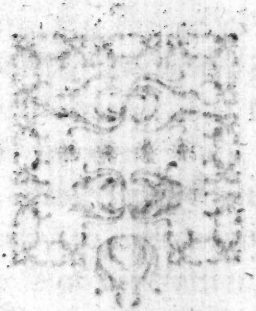
"it

" it in the luſts thereof, in longing after a kind of " ſelf-ſalvation, as in eating, and drinking, and " riſing up to play." Certainly a true Chriſtian ſpirit, rightly invigorated and actuated by this divine and potent principle, Chriſtian religion, cannot look upon heaven as merely future, or as ſomething perfectly diſtinct from him; but he eyes it as life, eternal life, the perfection of the pureſt and divineſt life communicable to a ſoul, and is daily thirſting after it, or rather, as it is in the text, growing up into it. I know that heaven is ſometimes called a reſt, in oppoſition to the diſſatisfaction of the uncentred and unbelieving ſoul; but, in oppoſition to a ſluggiſh, inert, and dormient reſt, it is here ſaid to be *life*, *eternal life*. Let us ſhew ourſelves to be living Chriſtians, by ſpringing up into the utmoſt conſummation of life: let it appear that CHRIST JESUS, the Prince of life, who was manifeſted on purpoſe *to take away our ſins*, 1 John iii. 5. hath not only covered our ſhame, and, as it were, embalmed our dead ſouls, to keep them from putrefaction, and ſtrewed them with the flowers of his merits, to take away their noiſome ſtink from the noſtrils of his Father, but hath truly advanced, re-inſtated, and made to flouriſh the ſouls that ſin had ſo miſerably degraded and deflowered. Deliver yourſelves, O immortal ſouls! from all thoſe unſuitable and unſeemly cares, ſtudies, and joys, from all thoſe low and particular ends and luſts, which do not only pinch and ſtraiten

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but even debase and debauch you: let it not be said, that the king of *Sodom* made *Abraham* rich; that your main delight, happiness, and contentment are derived from any prosperous, plentiful, peaceable, pompous state, any thing that may be called a self-accommodation, either in the world that now is, or that which is to come; but from the righteousness of faith, and your vital union with the FATHER and the SON: to whom, in the unity of the SPIRIT, be honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

COMMUNION



COMMUNION WITH THE DEITY.

1 JOHN I. 3.

— *Our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.*

THESE words expreſs the way of a Chriſtian's living, and that kind of converſe whereby a good man is diſtinguiſhed from all other men.

A GOOD man is not differenced from other men by any thing without him, any church privileges which are common to hypocrites and ſincere Chriſtians; any external viſible performances, in which the diſciples of the Phariſees may be more abundant and more ſpecious than the diſciples of CHRIST,

Matt. ix. 14. much leſs by any corporal or temporal enjoyment or ornament, ſtrength, beauty, riches, deſcent, *&c.* nor by any carnal relation, though it were to *Abraham*, as the *Jews* bragged of their father *Abraham*, John viii. 33. but by ſomething internal, ſubſtantial, by a relation to GOD; the character of a good man muſt be fetched from his correſpondence to the chief good, and the happineſs of a ſoul muſt be judged of by its relation to life, and love, and bleſſedneſs itſelf. Things external, corporal, temporal, make ſome difference amongſt men, but it is but nominal and titular in compariſon: by theſe men are ſaid to be rich or poor, noble or ignoble; but men are really and ſubſtantially differenced by the relation that they have to GOD; by this they are good or bad, godly or wicked. This is the moſt certain and proper note of a good man, *viz.* Communion with GOD: in all other things he may be like other men, but in this he differs from and excels them all. This is a character proper *quarto modo*; for it agrees to every good man, to none but a good man, and always to him, as we ſhall ſee hereafter. The ground of my diſcourſe then ſhall be this ſhort and plain propoſition, *viz.* "A godly man hath com-"munion with GOD."

IN order to the more diſtinct handling hereof, I muſt premiſe a few things briefly.

1. "THAT the gracious and loving GOD made "nothing miſerable of all that he made." There are no ſlaves born in his great houſe of the world. He

He made all things out of himſelf, and he hath no idea of evil in himſelf, ſo that it was not poſſible that he ſhould make any thing evil or miſerable. Every thing was good, *Gen.* i. 31. and ſo in ſome ſenſe happy. He was free to make the world, but making it, he could not make it evil or miſerable. Every thing is the product of almighty love and goodneſs.

2. "THE happineſs of all creatures conſiſts in "their acting agreeably to that nature that GOD "gave them, and thoſe ends which he propounded "to them, and ſuitably to thoſe laws which he "gave them;" which laws were contrived with the greateſt ſuitableneſs to thoſe natures, and ſubſerviency to thoſe ends. Every creature is in its kind happy, whilſt it acts agreeably to that nature which the wiſe Creator implanted in it; as the ſun runs its race without ceaſing, and rejoices ſo to do, and is, in ſome ſenſe, happy in ſo doing. Departing from that nature the creature becomes miſerable, as the earth bringing forth briers and thorns, inſtead of thoſe good fruits which it was appointed to bring forth, is ſaid to be curſed, *Gen.* iii. 17, 18.

3. "THE happineſs of the creature is higher or "lower, greater or leſſer, according as it comes "nearer to GOD, or is farther off from him," according as it receives more or leſs from him, according to what communion it hath with him. The life and happineſs of the ſun is much lower than that of a man, becauſe it cannot enjoy ſuch

high and excellent communications from, or communion with GOD as man doth.

4. "THERE can be no communion without "likeneſs." The ſun ſhines upon a ſtone wall, as well as upon man, but a ſtone wall has no communion with the ſun, becauſe it hath no eyes to ſee the light of it as man hath, nor can receive the benign influences of its heat as the herbs do. A log of wood lieth in the water as well as the fiſh, but it hath no communion with the water, nor receives any advantage by it as the fiſh doth. GOD is preſent, according to his infinite eſſence with the devils as well as with the angels, but they have no likeneſs in nature to him, and ſo no communion with him, as theſe have.

5. "GOD hath given a more large and excel-"lent capacity to man, than to any other of his "creatures upon earth." GOD hath endued man with reaſon, and ſo made him capable of a higher life, and a more excellent communion with his Maker than all the reſt. The rational ſoul, of all ſublunary creatures, is only capable to know, love, ſerve, enjoy, imitate GOD, and ſo to have a glorious communion with him. The ſun, in all its glory and brightneſs, is not ſo excellent a being as any ſoul of man upon this account. And although man, by his fall, loſt his actual communion with GOD, yet he is a reaſonable creature ſtill; he hath not loſt his capacity of receiving influences from him, and enjoying communion with him. The world,

world, when it is at the darkeſt, is yet capable of being enlightened.

6. "WHEN the nature of man is, by divine "grace, healed of its diſtemperature, and reſtored "to its former rectitude, to act ſuitably to the end "for which it was made, and to ſpend itſelf upon "its proper object, then man comes to have a right "communion with GOD, and to be happy." All rational ſouls are capable of holding communion with GOD, but all do not hold communion with him; but they that expreſs the purity and holineſs of the divine life, that know GOD, and live like him, theſe are his children, *Matt.* v. 45. and thoſe only do rightly and really converſe with him: when the Spirit of GOD informs theſe rational ſouls, and derives the ſtrength of a divine life through them, and ſtamps the lively impreſſions of divine perfections upon them, rendering our hearts, wills, and ways, conformable to that glorious pattern, that infinite good, then do we enjoy a proper communion with him, and are truly bleſſed; though we are not completely bleſſed, till this conformity be perfected according to what thoſe ſouls are, or may be capable of.

THIS is the true and proper notion of man's communion with GOD, and relation to him, which we cannot fully deſcribe, till we more fully enjoy. That ſoul that truly lives and feeds upon GOD, does taſte more than it can tell; and yet it can tell this, that this is the moſt high, noble, excellent, glorious life in the whole world.

THIS communion, as alſo the intimateneſs and cloſeneſs of it, are deſcribed variouſly in the holy ſcriptures, by the ſimilitude of members being in the body, 1 *Cor.* xii. 27. of branches being in the vine, *John* xv. 1, 2. by being *formed according to God's image*, Rom. viii. 29. *changed into his image*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. by *God's dwelling in the ſoul, and the ſoul in him*, 1 John iv. 16. by CHRIST's being formed in the ſoul, *Gal.* iv. 19. by the ſoul's having CHRIST, 1 *John* v. 12. by CHRIST's ſupping with the ſoul, and the ſoul with him, *Rev.* iii. 20. Becauſe nothing is more our own, nor more one with us, than that which we eat and drink, being incorporated into us; therefore is this ſpiritual communion between GOD and the godly ſoul oftentimes in ſcripture deſcribed by our eating and drinking with him. Thus GOD was pleaſed to allow his people under the Law, when they had offered up a part of their beaſts in ſacrifice to him, to ſit down and feaſt upon the reſt, as a token of that familiarity and oneneſs that was between him and them. By the like action our SAVIOUR ſhadowed out the ſame myſtery, when, in the ſacrament of his ſupper, he appointed them to ſit down to eat and drink with him, to intimate their feeding upon him, and moſt cloſe communion with him: yea, the ſtate of glory, which is the moſt perfect communion with GOD, is thus ſhadowed out too, *Matt.* viii. 11. *Rev.* xix. 9. And, which is worth noting, I think the ſacramental eating and drinking hath ſome reference to that moſt intimate communion of the ſaints with GOD

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in glory: our SAVIOUR himſelf ſeems to imply as much in that ſpeech of his, *Luke* xxii. 30. *That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom:* in which words he ſeems plainly to allude to the ſacramental eating and drinking which he had a little before inſtituted, *viz.* ver. 19. Which makes ſome to believe that that geſture is to be retained in that ordinance, which is moſt proper and uſual to expreſs familiarity and communion; and to take away that geſture, is to deſtroy one great end of our SAVIOUR in appointing this ſupper, which was to repreſent that familiar communion which is between himſelf and every believing ſoul. I will not here examine the validity of their argument, which, poſſibly, if preſſed home, might introduce a rudeneſs into the worſhip of GOD, under pretence of familiarity: but it ſeems very plain, that the nature of that ordinance doth ſhadow out the intimate communion between GOD and a godly ſoul.

I HAVE already, in part, prevented myſelf, and ſhewed you wherein the ſoul's communion with GOD conſiſts: but yet, to give you a more diſtinct knowledge of this great myſtery, I ſhall unfold it in theſe three following particulars.

1ſt, "A GODLY ſoul hath communion with GOD "in his attributes." When the ſoul of man is molded and formed into a reſemblance of the divine nature, then hath it a true fellowſhip with him. Now, this communion with GOD in his attributes is to be ſeen two ways.

1. "WHEN the ſoul is in its meaſure, accord-"ing to the capacity of a creature, all that which "GOD is." This is the communion which the angels have with GOD: their beholding of the face of GOD is not to be underſtood of a mere ſpeculation, or an idle gazing upon a Deity, but they ſee him by receiving his image upon themſelves, and reflecting his glory and brightneſs; they partake of the goodneſs, purity, holineſs, wiſdom, righteouſneſs of GOD, which makes them ſuch glorious ſpirits; and the want of this makes the other, whom we call devils, to be what they are. Thus godly men ſhall have communion with GOD, they ſhall ſee GOD, *Matt.* v. 8. *Heb.* xii. 14. Yea, thus they have communion with him in ſome meaſure: they do not only ſee GOD in the world, as the devils do, nor ſee him in the word, as many hypocritical and wicked men do, but they ſee him in themſelves, in the frame of their own ſouls, they find themſelves molded into his image, and a reſemblance of him drawn upon them. This is a beautiful viſion of GOD, true and real, though not full and complete. This is ſet out in ſcripture by being *holy as God is holy*, 1 Pet. i. 16. *perfect as God is perfect*, Matt. v. 48. This our SAVIOUR exhorts us to ſeek after, *Matt.* xi. 29. *Take my yoke upon you, learn of me; for I am meek and lowly:* and the Apoſtle, *Eph.* v. 1. *Be ye followers of God, as dear children.* When the nature and perfections of GOD, his holineſs, goodneſs, righteouſneſs, wiſdom, *&c.* are copied out upon our natures, and the

the ſame ſpirit is in us which was in CHRIST JESUS, then have we a true communion with GOD; which bleſſed communion, when the ſoul becomes all that which GOD is, is by a conformity of nature.

2. "WHEN the ſoul, in its actions as a creature, doth rightly anſwer to the attributes of the Creator." As when the ſoul doth anſwer the goodneſs of GOD with ſuitable affections of love, and joy, and delight; when the ſoul doth correſpond to the ſovereignty and wiſdom of GOD by the acts of ſelf-denial and reſignation; and doth converſe with the righteouſneſs of GOD by patience, and a holy acquieſcency. When the ſoul doth rightly exert thoſe acts which are proper and ſuitable to the nature of GOD, then it may be ſaid to hold communion with him in his attributes. Now this ſuitableneſs of the ſoul, I mean eſpecially with reference to the incommunicable attributes of GOD, where there is no place for imitation, though it hold good in the reſt alſo.

2dly, "A GODLY ſoul hath communion with GOD in his word." To read, profeſs, or hear the word, is not to hold a real communion with GOD therein: many do ſo that are ſtrangers to GOD: a man may read my letters, and yet correſpond with my enemy. That ſon in the goſpel, that heard his father's command, and anſwered, *I go, Sir*, but went not, had no right communion with his paternal authority. But when the ſoul is ennobled into ſuch a frame as this word doth re-

quire, then it holds communion with GOD in his word; *e. g.* when the ſoul puts forth thoſe acts of humiliation, holy fear, and reverence, godly trembling, which do ſuit the nature of a divine threatning, when the ſoul anſwers the command of GOD with ſuitable reſolutions, repentings, reformations, and real obedience, when it entertains the promiſe with ſuitable acts of holy delight, joy, refreſhment, recumbency, and acquieſces in the ſame, then doth it truly converſe with GOD in his word.

3dly, "A GODLY ſoul hath communion with "GOD in his works." And that is, when the ſoul doth anſwer the ſeveral providences of GOD with ſuitable and pertinent affections and diſpoſitions. The godly ſoul doth not only eye and obſerve the hand of GOD in all things that fall out, but doth comply with thoſe providences, and is molded into that frame, and put upon thoſe duties which ſuch providences call for. Then doth the ſoul rightly hold communion with GOD in his works, when it is humbled under humbling providences, is refreſhed, ſtrengthened, and grows up under proſperous providences, as they did *Acts* ix. 31. who having reſt given them, were edified, comforted, multiplied, *&c.* When the ſoul doth rightly comport with every providence, and the will is molded into the will of GOD, then do we hold communion with him in his works. This theme is large, becauſe the works of GOD are manifold, of creation, redemption, preſervation, works towards other men, and towards ourſelves, both

towards

towards our outward and inward man: a godly ſoul hath communion with GOD in all theſe; in the ſenſe that I named even now, though perhaps not equally in all, yet ſincerely and truly.

BY what hath been ſaid, you underſtand that right fellowſhip with GOD is not a bare communion of names; to have the name of GOD called upon us, and to be called Chriſtians, or the people of GOD, or to name the name of GOD, to profeſs it, to cry LORD, LORD, doth not make any one really and truly the better man, doth not make a ſoul rightly happy: it is not enough to cry, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*, with them in *Jer.* i. 4. to make our boaſt in the law with them *Rom.* ii. 23. to call ourſelves the children of *Abraham*, as the *Jews* did in *John* the Baptiſt's time, *Matt.* iii. 9. Theſe privileges and profeſſions are extrinſical to the ſoul, and do nothing to the true ennobling of it. But right fellowſhip with GOD is a communion of hearts and natures, of will and affections, of intereſt and ends: to have one heart and will, the ſame intereſt and ends with GOD, is to be truly godly; a GOD-like man is the only godly man: a CHRIST-like nature brought into the ſoul doth only denominate a man a true Chriſtian. It is not ſpeaking together, but loving and living together, that brings GOD and the ſoul into one; *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt that liveth in me*, Gal. ii. 20. And thus, I ſuppoſe, you have a fair account why the Apoſtle *James*, chap. ii. does ſo much prefer works before faith, (for indeed faith

is nothing worth, ſave only that faith which joins the ſoul to the object, and makes the thing believed one's own;) as alſo why the Apoſtle *Paul* prefers love before a faith of miracles, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2. Though indeed a juſtifying faith is the moſt miraculous, that faith that unites the ſoul and GOD together is more excellent, and indeed more miraculous than the faith that removes mountains. When I conſider the proper happineſs, and perfection of a ſoul, and the nature of this true bliſsful communion with GOD, I cannot but wonder how it is poſſible that men ſhould take their communion with GOD to conſiſt in a ſlight acquaintance with him, profeſſion of him, and performances to him. I am confident it is not poſſible that men ſhould have any true feeling of happineſs in ſuch acquaintance, any more than a man can be really filled with the ſeeing or carving of meat which he eats not.

BEFORE I apply the doctrine, give me leave to lay down ſome rules or poſitions tending further to explain and clear it.

1. THIS muſt be held, which I touched upon before, that "there can be no communion between "GOD and man, but by a likeneſs of nature, a "new, a divine principle implanted in the ſoul." A beaſt hath no communion with a man, becauſe reaſon, the ground of ſuch communion, is wanting. Of all the creatures, there was none found that could be a meet help for *Adam*, that could be taken into the human ſociety, till *Eve* was made, who

who was a human perſon. So neither can there be any conjunction of the ſoul with GOD, but by oneneſs of ſpirit, 1 *Cor.* vi. 17. *He that is joined to the Lord is one ſpirit.*

2. "THERE can be no communion with GOD "but by a Mediator," no Mediator but CHRIST JESUS, who is GOD-man. Two cannot walk together, nor hold communion, except they be agreed: and there can be no agreement made between GOD and man but by CHRIST JESUS. Therefore it is ſaid here, *Our communion is with the Father and the Son*, q. d. with the Father by the Son: and faith, whereby the ſoul and GOD are united, is ſtill ſaid to be *faith in Chriſt*, as we find up and down the ſcriptures.

3. "THERE can be no perfect communion with "GOD in this life." Our communion with heaven, whilſt we are upon earth, is imperfect: our reſemblance to GOD is ſcant and dark in compariſon of what it ſhall be. We know but in part, love but in part, enjoy but in part; we are but in part holy and happy. There can be no perfect communion with GOD, till there be a perfect reconciliation of natures as well as perſons; and that cannot be whilſt there is any thing unlike to GOD in the ſoul, whilſt any impure thing dwells in the ſoul which cannot truly cloſe with GOD, nor GOD with that. The HOLY SPIRIT can never ſuffer any defiled thing to unite itſelf with it; μὴ καθαρῷ καθαρῷ ἐφάπτεσθαι μὴ θεμιτὸν ἦ, "it is not lawful for "any impure thing to mix itſelf with pure divi-

"nity,"

" nity," ſo *Socrates* the heathen. *What communion hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs?* ſaith the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* vi. 14. and ſo far as a righteous man is in any part unrighteous, ſo far he is a ſtranger to GOD: the unregenerate part of a regenerate man hath no more communion with GOD than a wicked man, than the devil himſelf hath, no more than darkneſs hath with light.

4. " OUR communion with GOD muſt be diſ-" tinguiſhed from the ſenſe and feeling of it." Many have run upon ſad miſcarriages, (and thoſe indeed extremes) whilſt they place communion with GOD in the ſenſe and feeling of it, in raptures of joy, extaſies, and tranſports of ſoul: which indeed, if they be real, are not ſo much it, as the flower of it, ſomething reſulting and ſeparable from it. Communion with GOD cannot be loſt in a ſaint, for then he is no ſaint; for it is the *proprium quarto modo* of a ſaint to have communion with GOD: and a ſaint under deſertion hath communion with GOD even then as really, though not ſo feelingly, as at any other time, ſo far as he is ſanctified. But the ſenſe of this communion may be very much, if not altogether loſt, and oftentimes is loſt.

5. " A SOUL's communion with GOD cannot " be interrupted by any local mutations." It is a ſpiritual conjunction, and is not violated by any confinement; the walls of a priſon cannot ſeparate GOD and the godly ſoul; baniſhment cannot drive a ſoul from GOD, —*Cœlum non animum mutant, &c.* The bleſſed angels, thoſe miniſtring ſpirits, when they

they are diſpatched into the utmoſt ends of the world upon the ſervice of GOD, are even then beholding the face of GOD, and enjoy as intimate communion with him as ever: the caſe is the ſame with all godly ſouls, whoſe communion with GOD does not depend upon any local ſituation; it is not thouſands of miles that can beget a diſtance between GOD and the ſoul. Indeed nothing but ſin does it, or can do it:—*Your iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God*, Iſa. lix. 2. nothing but ſin is contrary to this divine fellowſhip, and ſo nothing but that can interrupt this ſpiritual ſociety. To ſpeak properly, ſin does not ſo much cauſe the ſoul's diſtance from GOD, as itſelf is that diſtance. Man and wife remain one, though at a hundred miles diſtance; and believing ſouls maintain a certain ſpiritual communion one with another, though in ſeveral parts of the world. The ſociety and communion of godly ſouls one with another, ſo far as it is ſpiritual, cannot be interrupted by bodily diſtance, much leſs then the fellowſhip of GOD with the godly man, who carries about with him, and in him, a divine nature, the image of GOD, a holy GOD-like diſpoſition whitherſoever he goes.

6. "THIS communion with GOD which I have "been ſpeaking of, is much better than all out-"ward acts and enjoyments, duties and ordinances "whatſoever, though they be never ſo many or "ſpecious." GOD himſelf long ſince decided this matter, that a broken and contrite heart is better than all ſacrifices, *Pſalm* li. 17. that to obey was better

better than ſacrifice, 1 *Sam.* xv. 22. that mercy was better than ſacrifice, *Hoſea* vi. 6. that to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with GOD, was to be preferred before thouſands of rams, and ten thouſands of rivers of oil, *Mic.* vi. 7, 8. It holds, in reference to goſpel duties, though they may ſeem more ſpiritual than the oblations of the law. A real ſoul-communion with GOD, a communion of hearts and natures, of wills and affections, of intereſts and ends, is infinitely more excellent than all hearing, praying, celebration of ſabbaths or ſacraments, *James* i. 25. as the end is more excellent than the means: for ſo ſtands the caſe between them.

YEA, I will add, (though ſome proud and wanton ſpirits have made ſtrange work with it, yet) it is a ſure and moſt excellent doctrine, that this ſpiritual communion is a continual ſabbath, (a ſabbath of communion is much better than a ſabbath of reſt:) this is the ſabbath that the angels and ſaints in heaven keep, though they know no ſuch thing as a firſt day in the week, have no reading, preaching, or praying, amongſt them. This is a continual praying, and effectual way of praying in ſilence. A right active imbibing faith does virtually contain a prayer in it; right believing is powerful praying. The knees, eyes, and tongues, bear the leaſt ſhare in prayer, the whole of the work lies upon the ſoul, and particularly upon faith in the ſoul, which is indeed the life and ſoul of prayer. Faith can pray without words; but the moſt elegant

gant words, the phraſe of angels, is not worthy to be called prayer without faith. I ſpeak not ſo much of faith inditing a prayer, or giving life to it, as of its being virtually prayer, if not ſomething more; for indeed faith is a real bringing down of that GOD, and ſucking in of thoſe influences into the ſoul, which prayer only looks up for.

COMMUNION with GOD is a continual faſt; it is that ſpiritual and moſt excellent way of faſting, whereby the ſoul emptying itſelf of itſelf and all ſelf-fulneſs, ſelf-ſufficiency, ſelf-confidence, receives of the fulneſs of GOD alone, and is filled therewith. A ſoul communing rightly with GOD, is a ſoul emptied of, and, as it were, faſting from itſelf; which is the moſt excellent way of faſting.

IT is a continual thankſgiving; and indeed the beſt way of thankſgiving in the world. To render up ourſelves to GOD purely and entirely, to reflect the glory of GOD in an holy and god-like temper, is a real and living thank-offering. This is that hallelujah ſo much ſpoke of, which the angels and ſaints in glory do ſing perpetually: what other adjunct of it there may be, I will not here diſpute.

THIS communion of hearts and wills is a conſtant and moſt excellent celebration of ſacraments. The ſoul that is really baptized into the Spirit of the LORD JESUS, and feeds upon GOD, and is one with him, keeps a continual ſacrament; without which the ſacramental eating and drinking is but a

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jejune and dry devotion. In a word, it is not poſſible for any thing that is extrinſical to the ſoul to make it happy; but the ſoul that is advanced into the noble ſtate of communion with GOD, is made partaker of a new nature, and is truly happy.

NAY, further, I will add, that this communion with GOD is not only better than all duties and ordinances, but even better than all revelations, evidences, diſcoveries that can be made or given to the ſoul, *ab extra*, all that are from without. A manifeſtation of GOD, *i. e.* of a divine life in the ſoul, is much better than ſuch a manifeſtation as *Moſes* had of his glory in the cleft of the rock, *Exod.* xxxiii. 22. Many think, O if they might but be aſſured of the love of GOD, of the pardon of ſin, of an intereſt in CHRIST, they ſhould be happy! why, I will tell you, if you had a voice from heaven, ſaying that ye were the beloved children of GOD, as CHRIST had; an angel ſent from GOD to tell you that ye were beloved, and highly favoured of GOD, as his mother *Mary* had, yet were communion with GOD to be preferred before theſe: for theſe things could not make a ſoul happy without real communion with GOD, but communion with GOD can and doth make a ſoul happy without theſe: and to this purpoſe, I ſuppoſe, I may apply that famous ſpeech of our SAVIOUR's by way of alluſion, *It is more bleſſed to give, than to receive*, to give up one's ſelf, one's heart, will, intereſts, and affections, to GOD, than to receive any external diſcoveries and manifeſtations from him.

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Why do we ſo earneſtly ſeek after ſigns from without us of GOD's preſence with us, as if there were any thing better or more deſirable to the ſoul than *Emanuel*, GOD with us, or, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Chriſt in us the hope of glory?* He that deſires any other evidence of grace, but more grace, does not only light up a candle to ſee the ſun by, but indeed he acts like one that thinks there is ſomething better than GOD himſelf; though I do not ſay that all do think ſo who are covetous of ſuch manifeſtations. But this I will ſay, and you may do well to think upon it, that holy longings after a true and ſpiritual communion with GOD do certainly ſpring from a divine principle in the ſoul; whereas a thirſt after aſſurance of GOD's love, and reconciliation of our perſons with him, may be only the fruit of ſelf-love and intereſt. *Let me die the death of the righteous!* you know whoſe wiſh it was.

7. "THOUGH communion with GOD concerns "the whole ſoul, and all the faculties, affections, "and motions of it," (it is GOD's ſpreading his influences, and exerciſing his ſovereignty over all the powers of the ſoul, and their mutual ſpending of themſelves upon him, and conforming to him) "yet the great acts of the ſoul, whereby it chiefly "holds communion with GOD, are loving and "believing." Love is the joining and knitting of the ſoul to GOD; faith is the ſoul's labouring after more intimate conjunction with him, a ſucking in influences from him, and participations of him into the ſoul. We may ſay that faith fetches in

ſupplies

ſupplies from heaven, and love enjoys them; faith ſucks in ſweetneſs and virtue from CHRIST, and love feeds upon it. Certainly theſe two eminent graces grow, live, and thrive together, and are inſeparable companions. It is ſomewhat difficult to diſtinguiſh them, or to aſſign to each his proper place and work in the ſoul; they ſeem mutually to act, and to be mutually acted by each other: perhaps the Apoſtle might have reſpect to this myſtery, when he ſpeaks ſo doubtfully, *Gal.* v. 6. πίστις δι ἀγάπης ἐνεργεμένη, which words may be tranſlated, either faith acting by love, or faith acted by love. We know indeed that in the ſtate of perfect communion, which we call glory, love ſhall abide and flouriſh more abundantly, and there ſhall be no room for faith there, not as to the principal act of it; but which of them hath the greater part in maintaining our communion with GOD in this world, is not eaſy, nor indeed needful to determine. The godly ſoul is the moſt proper temple wherein GOD dwelleth, according to that 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. *Ye are the temple of the living God*; faith and love are the *Jachin* and *Boaz*, the two great pillars which keep up the ſoul as a temple; take away theſe, and it remains a ſoul indeed, but the ſoul does not remain a temple to the LORD. In a word, theſe two are the ſoul's principal handmaids which ſhe uſeth about this bleſſed gueſt; faith goes out and brings him in, and love entertains him; by faith ſhe finds him whom ſhe ſeeks, and by love

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ſhe kiſſes him whom ſhe finds, as the ſpouſe is deſcribed, *Cant.* viii. 1.

8. "THE communion that is between GOD and "the godly ſoul is altogether different from that "communion that is between creatures." Here I might ſhew you how it exceeds and excels that, in many reſpects; but I ſhall not inſiſt upon any of thoſe particulars, nor indeed upon any of thoſe many differences that are between them, ſave only upon this one: the communion that is between creature and creature is perfect in its kind, and ſo, conſequently, gives mutual ſatisfaction; I mean, it terminates the expectations, ſo that nothing remains to be enjoyed in them more than what is enjoyed. The creature is ſhallow, and ſoon is fathomed, we ſoon come to the bottom of it: a finite can graſp a finite being, and enjoy it, as I may ſay, all at once. A man may come ſo near to his friend that he can come no nearer, enjoy him as fully as he is capable to enjoy, or the other to be enjoyed: created ſweetneſs may be exhauſted to the very bottom. But the ſoul's communion with GOD does not give it any ſuch ſatisfaction, though indeed, in ſome ſenſe, it gives a ſatisfaction of a much higher and more excellent kind. I told you before, that the ſoul's communion with GOD is imperfect in this life; and therefore it muſt needs follow, that it cannot ſatisfy; that is, not terminate and fill up the deſires of it. Communion with GOD is maintained by faith and love, as you have heard, which proves it to be very ſweet; but

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it alſo admits of hope, which proves it to be not ſatisfactory: for where there is yet any place left for hope, there is no full or ſatisfactory enjoyment. This may ſerve as a certain note whereby to judge of the truth of that communion with GOD; it is not glutting to the ſoul, but will certainly manifeſt itſelf in inceſſant hungrings, *inter opes inops*, the ſoul is in the midſt of plenty, and yet cries out as if it were ready to ſtarve for want. When I conſider the temper of ſome perfectioniſts, who cry down duties and ordinances, as low and unprofitable rudiments, and boaſt of their full and inacceſſionable attainments, and compare it with the temper of the great Apoſtle, who did not reckon that he had attained, but ſtill followed after that he might apprehend; who forgot the things that were behind, and reached forth unto thoſe things that were before, preſſing towards the mark, *&c.* Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. I am ready to cry out, *Aut hic non eſt apoſtolus, aut hic non ſunt apoſtolici*; but an Apoſtle he was, and had very intimate communion with his LORD; and therefore, I confeſs, I cannot allow theſe men ſo high a place in my opinion, as they have in their own. GOD is infinite, and therefore though the ſoul may be ever graſping, yet it can never comprehend; and yet the ſoul finds him to be infinitely good, and ſo cannot ceaſe graſping at him neither. The godly ſoul ſees that there is yet much more to be enjoyed of GOD, and in him; and therefore, though it be very near to him, yet cries out and complains of its diſtance from

from him, O when ſhall I come and appear before him! though it be united to him, yet it longs to be yet more one with him ſtill, to be in a cloſer conjunction. The godly ſoul forgets, with *Paul*, what it hath received, not through diſingenuity or unthankfulneſs, but through an holy ardor and covetouſneſs: all that he hath of GOD ſeems little, becauſe there is yet ſo much to be had. Though the godly ſoul drinks of the fountain, yet that is not enough, it would lie down by it; though it do lie down by it, yet ſo it is not ſatisfied neither, except it may bathe itſelf, and even be ſwallowed up therein. Behold a paradox! the godly ſoul is moſt thirſty, though, according to CHRIST's promiſe, it thirſts no more: it is moſt reſtleſs, though, according to his promiſe, it have reſt. It is proper to GOD alone to reſt in his love, for the creature cannot in this imperfect ſtate: by this we know that we are not yet in heaven; for it is a ſtate of perfect reſt, not ſloth, or ceſſation, but ſatisfaction. Faith is the fever of the ſoul, rendering it more thirſty by how much the more it drinks in of the water of life, the living ſtreams that flow forth from the throne of GOD and of the Lamb. As the waters of the ſanctuary are deſcribed by the Prophet, growing deeper and deeper, *Ezek.* xlvii. 3, 4, 5. ſo hope, which is the ſoul's appetite, grows larger and larger, and cannot be ſatisfied till the ſoul's capacity be filled up.

THE doctrinal part being thus briefly diſpatched, it will be eaſy to infer ſome things by way of corollary,

corollary, I ſhall content myſelf with three only amongſt many.

1*ſt*, "ALL wicked men are ſtrangers to GOD." We know indeed that GOD, according to his infinite eſſence, is preſent with all his creatures: not only men, but even devils too, have their being in him; he hath ſpread his omnipotence, as the foundation whereupon the whole creation doth ſtand; he reared up the world in himſelf, and in him it doth ſubſiſt at this day. However angels and men have ſadly fallen from GOD, yet they may be truly ſaid to live in him ſtill; and although all wicked ſouls ſtraggle off from GOD, as to their diſpoſitions and affections, ingrafting themſelves into another ſtock by ſin and wickedneſs, yet they cannot poſſibly ſtraggle from him as to their ſubſiſtence, as the Apoſtle teaches the *Athenian* Philoſophers, *Acts* xvii. 27. *He is not far from every one of us*, though few feel after him or find him. And it may be truly ſaid, in ſome ſenſe, that all the creatures, yea, the very worſt of them, have a communion with GOD; all partake of him; no creature hath any thing of its own really diſtinct from him. Every thing that hath a being hath a relation to that infinite and ſupreme Being; and every living thing may be rightly ſaid to have communion with him who is life itſelf. And all thoſe ſeveral excellencies that are in the creatures are effluxes from GOD, who hath derived various prints of his own beauty and perfection upon every thing that he hath made. GOD's making of a thing

thing is no other than the communicating of himſelf thereunto. And therefore when you look into the world, do not view any creature in the narrow point of its own being, but in the unbounded eſſence of GOD, and therein love and admire it. But upon the immortal ſoul of man, GOD hath copied out his divine perfections more clearly and glorioufly than upon any other creature in this world. GOD could not make a rational ſoul, without communicating his own infinite wiſdom, power, life, and freedom unto it: ſo that there is more of the divine nature to be ſeen in the underſtanding and will of any one man, than in the whole fabric of heaven and earth.

NOTWITHSTANDING this, wicked men are ſtrangers to GOD. They live and move in GOD indeed, but they know it not, they conſider it not, they act as if they had no dependence upon him, no relation to him. Though they have ſome kind of communion with GOD, as creatures, yet this makes them not at all happy: for they are departed from GOD in their affections and diſpoſitions, they have degenerated from that ſubſerviency and ſubordination to the divine will, which is the proper perfection of the creature, and are *alienated from the life of God*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Eph.* iv. 18. It is not the ſoul's moving in GOD, that makes it truly and happily nigh unto him, but its moving towards GOD as the chief object, and according to the will of GOD as the chiefeſt rule; and therefore wicked men, who pitch upon other objects, and

walk by other laws, even the luſts and ordinances of their own fleſh and fancy, are properly ſtrangers to GOD, and miſerable. He is not properly ſaid to know GOD, who hath a notion of him formed in his head, but he whoſe heart and will is molded into a conformity to GOD, and a delight in him; ſo that a wicked man, though he know and believe, and tremble, as much as any of the devils, yet not loving nor delighting in GOD as his chiefeſt good, not being conformed to his image as the higheſt and pureſt perfection, may be truly ſaid to be eſtranged from him; which is a ſtate of hell, and death, and darkneſs. This is the man who, though not in words, yet interpretatively and really, ſaith unto GOD, *Depart from me, I deſire not the knowledge of thy ways*, with them in *Job* xxi. 14. Sinners really exempt themſelves from the dominion of CHRIST, and do really, though not audibly, ſay with them in the goſpel, *Luke* xix. 14. *We will not have this man to reign over us.* However men pretend to, and boaſt of their relation to and acquaintance with GOD, certainly all that live a mere ſenſual life, nonconformiſts to the image of GOD, are truly ſaid to be ſtrangers to him, and in a ſtate of non-communion with him, 1 *John* i. 6. 2 *Cor.* vi. 14.

2. "THE life of a true Chriſtian is the moſt "high and noble life in the world;" it exceeds the life of all other men, even of the greateſt men. The character that is here given of the godly man is the higheſt that can be given of any man, or indeed

deed of any creature. It is the higheſt glory and excellency of the creature to partake of the life of GOD, of the perfections of the Creator; and ſuch is the deſcription that the Spirit of GOD here makes of the godly man. What an unreaſonable and ſenſeleſs reproach is that which this wicked world doth caſt upon religion, calling it a low and deſpicable thing, and upon religious and godly men, calling them low-ſpirited, puny people? Can a man be better ſpirited than with the Spirit of GOD? Can any thing more truly ennoble a ſoul than a divine nature? Can a man be raiſed any higher than to heaven itſelf? So noble is the godly ſoul, *Prov.* xv. 24. *The way of life is above to the wiſe*; and conſequently all wicked men lead a low life, and are bound under chains of death and darkneſs: the righteous man is of a high and divine original, born of GOD, born from above; and therefore is more excellent than his neighbour, than any of his neighbours, even a king himſelf being judge, *Prov.* xii. 26. What a helliſh baſeneſs is that ſinful gallantry of ſpirit, what a brutiſhneſs is that ſenſuality of living, which the degenerate ſons of *Adam* do ſo much magnify! True goodneſs and excellency of ſpirit muſt be meaſured by the proportion that it bears to the ſupreme good, the infinite pattern of all perfection. What excellent perſons were thoſe renowned ſaints of old, of whom the Apoſtle ſays, that *the world was not worthy*, Heb. xi. 38. however they were thought *not worthy to live in the world*. What a noble and

generous ſpirit of true Chriſtian valour, patience, meekneſs, contempt of the world, and ſelf-denial, was that which was to be ſeen in the bleſſed Apoſtles, however they were eſteemed as the filth and ſweepings of the world, the *off-ſcouring of all things?* To which of the noble, wiſe, mighty men of the world, as ſuch, did GOD ever ſay, "Theſe are "the men that have fellowſhip with me, theſe are "the men that lead a noble and divine life?" No, no, *not many noble are called*; and when they are called, they are made more noble than ever they were by birth or deſcent, by places of preferment or command. The life of every wicked man, of what rank or ſize ſoever he be in the world, is but a low life, a life in moſt things common to the very beaſts with him: if the main of his buſineſs and delight be to eat, and drink, and work, and ſleep, and enjoy ſenſual pleaſures, what doth he? what enjoyeth he more than *the beaſts that periſh?* But the life of the meaneſt ſoul, that hath true and ſpiritual communion with GOD, is a life common to him with the bleſſed angels, thoſe *ſons of the morning*, the flower of the whole creation. That life which hath ſelf for its centre, muſt needs be a penurious and indeed a painful life: for how can the ſoul of man poſſibly feed to the full upon ſuch ſpare diet, ſuch ſcant fare as it finds at home? Nay indeed how can it chooſe but be in pain and torture whilſt it ſtretcheth itſelf upon a ſelf-ſufficiency, or creature-fulneſs, which is not at all commenſurate to it? But the ſoul that rightly ſtretches and ſpends

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all its faculties upon the infinite and bleſſed GOD, finds all its capacities filled up to the brim with that fountain of goodneſs, and itſelf perfectly matched with a ſuitable and ſatisfactory object. This is the true and only nobleneſs of ſpirit, when all the powers and faculties of this immortal ſoul are exalted and advanced into a true and vital ſympathy and communion with the chiefeſt good, formed according to his will, conformed to his image.

AND O that wiſdom might be more *juſtified of her children!* O that the life of GOD did but clearly manifeſt itſelf, and ſhine forth in the lives of them that call themſelves godly! Alas, that ever GOD himſelf ſhould ſuffer reproach by reaſon of the low-ſpiritedneſs and lazineſs of his ſervants! For this cauſe is religion evil ſpoken of; the LORD awake and enable us to expreſs and ſhew forth the divine life with all power and vigour, to live as high as the calling wherewith we are called, and ſo roll away this reproach!

3dly, "THE life of a Chriſtian is not a heavy "ſluggiſh thing, but active and vigorous," as the phraſe, communion with GOD, imports. Religion is a communication of life and vigour from him who is life itſelf; which makes the truly god-like ſoul to be quick and powerful in its motions. Every thing is by ſo much the ſwifter and ſtronger in its motions, by how much the nearer it is to its centre, as philoſophy tells us. Certainly by how much the nearer any man is gotten to GOD, who is the centre of ſouls, by ſo much the more does he covet

after more intimate communion with him, and the more eagerly lay hold upon him. Communion does neceſſarily imply reaction or reflection: the ſoul that receives of GOD, and his fulneſs, will certainly be returning itſelf into him again. Communion, in the very force of the phraſe, implies a mutualneſs; we cannot ſuppoſe a ſoul partaking of GOD, but it muſt needs mutually render up itſelf to him again. There can be no commerce nor correſpondence without returns: but what return can the godly ſoul make unto GOD? why, it renders up its whole ſelf unto him. Faith is a giving grace as well as a receiving, it gives up the ſoul back to CHRIST, as well as takes CHRIST into the ſoul; it ſucks in ſtrength and grace from GOD, and reciprocally ſpends the ſame, and the whole powers of the ſoul upon him. The happineſs of a godly ſoul doth not conſiſt in ceſſation and reſt; the ſoul itſelf being a powerful and active being; the happineſs of it, the very reſt of it, muſt alſo be active and vigorous. Where there is communion there muſt needs be quick and lively returns, reciprocations, reflections, and correſpondencies; the drawings of GOD are anſwered with the ſoul's running, *Cant.* i. 14. The motion of CHRIST's fingers begets a motion in the Chriſtian's ſoul, *Cant.* v. 4. *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.* Theſe are the divine and harmonious reſponſes which are made and maintained in the godly ſoul, the temple of the living GOD. O ſhake off that lazy and drowſy

ſpirit,

ſpirit, which hath ſo benumbed many in this cold and ſtupid age of the world; work out your ſalvation with care and diligence! If your religion be nothing but a ſpiritual kind of ſleep, your heaven will prove to be nothing but a pleaſant kind of dream.

COMMUNION with GOD ſpeaks ſomething divine, active, vigorous. The life of a Chriſtian doth not conſiſt only in ceſſation from evil, reformation of ſin, or dying thereunto; mortification is but one part of regeneration. It is the conceit, and, I doubt, the deceit of many nominal Chriſtians, that if they can but keep up an indifferent even ſpirit and converſation, free from groſs and ſcandalous ſins from day to day, they are happy enough; their utmoſt ambition is to be innocent and harmleſs. This indeed is neceſſary and praiſeworthy; but ſurely the happineſs of a ſoul lies higher: thus happy are all the creatures that keep in the ſtation, and keep up the order preſcribed them of GOD: thus happy is the ſun in the firmament, running his race continually, and never departing from the office which is aſſigned to it. But the ſoul of man is capable of a higher kind of happineſs, *viz.* Communion with GOD; which is, when the faculties thereof being awakened, refined, and acted by the Spirit of GOD, do reciprocally act, and ſpend themſelves upon him, longing to be perfectly ſwallowed up in him, and to be all that which GOD himſelf is, as far as the creature is capable to drink in the perfections of the Creator,

and become one with his Maker. This is that truly noble and divine life, which is here called communion with GOD, which the high-ſpirited and generous ſoul labours yet more and more to be growing up into, and perfected in. Keep yourſelves, with *David*, from your iniquities; it is ſomething to be freed from the guilt and power of ſin; but there is ſomewhat higher than this, a more excellent attainment, a more divine accompliſhment; go on therefore with the ſame *David*, and aſpire after this pure and bliſsful ſtate, this heaven upon earth, waiting for the more ample and glorious manifeſtations of GOD to you and in you, more than they that watch for the morning, as he did, *Pſalm* cxxx. 6. This inference was only of inſtruction, but the ſweetneſs and needfulneſs of the ſubject almoſt prevails with me to turn it into an earneſt exhortation, but that I would not prevent myſelf. Therefore I proceed to the next way of improving this doctrine, which ſhall be by way of conviction or reprehenſion.

1. IF our fellowſhip *is*, it reproves them that can take up with a *ſhall be*, a heaven to come. I am now ſpeaking, not to the worſt of men, whoſe very ſouls are ſwallowed up in ſenſual enjoyments, and impriſoned in their ſenſes: for theſe men either think of no heaven at all, or elſe they place their heaven and happineſs in the enjoyment of themſelves or of the creature. Nor yet do I ſpeak to thoſe men who, being perſuaded of a future ſtate, do indeed wiſh for a heaven to come, but then it

is

is a poor kind of low and earthly heaven, consisting in ease, rest, safety, freedom from troubles or torments, which is the best happiness which most men understand, the highest heaven that any carnal mind can see or soar up to. But I am speaking to a better and finer sort of souls than these, that are verily possessed with a sense of a pure and spiritual heaven in the world to come; yea, they are so overpowered with the foresight of it, as that they earnestly expect and wish for it; yea, the hopes of it sustain and strengthen their hearts under the manifold temptations and persecutions of this present world; they are so verily persuaded of the truth of it, and of their own title to it too, that they are content to abide this long and disconsolate night of dimness, and anguish, and frightfulness, merely in expectation of the dawning of that day, that clear and bright day of their glorious and everlasting redemption. And herein I am far from blaming them, nay, I must needs commend their magnanimous faith and self-denial. But, in the mean time, they dwell too much upon heaven as a future state, and comfort themselves only in a happiness to come, not longing and labouring to find a heaven opened within themselves, a beginning of eternal bliss brought into themselves: they are too well content with a certain reversion, and do not eagerly enough endeavour a present possession, to be actually instated in so much of the inheritance of souls as may fall to their share even in this lower world; this slothful temper and inacti-

vity I do condemn wherever it is found; yea, tho' it be in my own ſoul. Every thing in the world, by a natural principle, thirſts after its proper reſt, and a happineſs ſuitable to the nature of it; no creature can be content, though it may be conſtrained, to be at a diſtance from its centre, but is ſtill carried out towards its own perfection. And why then ſhould a godly ſoul, who is GOD's only new creature in the world, be content with a ſtate of imperfection? why ſhould not the ſaint as eagerly covet, and as earneſtly purſue the moſt intimate and cloſe communion and conjunction with his GOD, as they do with their reſpective centres? Can any earthly ſenſual man be content with an inheritance in reverſion, ſo as to ſuſpend his minding and following of the world till hereafter? Can any ambitious ſpirit, who places his main happineſs and contentment in popular eſtimation, and worldly greatneſs, be content to ſtand gazing at preferments; will he be willing to ſit ſtill, and wait till they drop into his mouth? No, no, there is a raging thirſt in the ſoul, which will not ſuffer it to be at reſt, but is ſtill awakening and provoking all the powers of the whole man, till they ariſe and fetch in water to quench it. And therefore we read of men making haſte to be rich, *Prov.* xxviii. 22. and haſtning after another god, *Pſalm* xvi. 4. which eager and ardent paſſions towards earthly objects, you may ſee livelily deſcribed in the inſtances of *Ahab*, *Amnon*, and *Haman*, in the holy ſtory. And is there any reaſon to be given, why

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that new nature and divine principle, which GOD putteth into regenerate ſouls, ſhould not carry them as haſtily and forcibly to a preſent fruition of their proper object and happineſs, (ſo far as at preſent it may be enjoyed) as that corrupt and degenerate nature doth hurry them on in whom it ruleth, towards the ſatisfaction of their beaſtly luſts? Divines ſpeak ſometimes of making heaven and eternal life preſent to ourſelves, and ſay that this is the work of faith; which is an high and excellent doctrine, but, I doubt, not thoroughly underſtood by ordinary Chriſtians. To make heaven preſent to one's ſelf, is not only to inſiſt upon a ſtate of future happineſs in frequent meditations, to think much of it, neither is this that noble employment of ſaving faith: but the life and power of faith is moſt eminently exerted in ſucking in participations of life and grace from CHRIST, and in a real bringing down of GOD and heaven into the ſoul. The truth is, heaven is a ſtate of perfect communion with GOD, a ſtate of love, joy, peace, purity, freedom; and as far as any ſoul is in ſuch a ſtate upon earth, ſo far it is above the earth, and may be ſaid to be in heaven. Therefore a right active ſoul, that truly underſtands its proper and ſpiritual heaven and happineſs, ſo far as it is thus active and ſenſible, cannot be content to ſtay for all its happineſs till the world to come; cannot be content to be unhappy, no not for an hour, but is ſtill growing up in GOD, and ſpringing up into everlaſting life, *John* iv. 14.

2. IT

2. IT reprehends them that make a ſtir about the kingdom of CHRIST in the world, and mens being brought into the communion of the church, but advance not his kingdom in their own ſouls, nor long to have their own ſouls advanced into that noble ſtate of communion with *the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* There is, doubtleſs, a generation of ſuch popular Chriſtians, who being ſtrangers to the life, and power, and ſpirit of true religion, endeavour to put off themſelves to the world, and commend themſelves to the charity of their brethren, by a pretended zeal for the kingdom of CHRIST in the world, and the glorious manifeſtation of it, as they ſpeak. I know indeed that it is worthy the cares, and prayers, and utmoſt diligence of every ſerious Chriſtian, to ſpread and propagate the knowledge of the goſpel, to pour out the ointment of CHRIST's name far and near: a more pure and ſpiritual adminiſtration of all goſpel ordinances throughout the world is highly deſirable; yea, and I think an indifferent and careleſs diſpoſition towards the worſhip of GOD argues much of an earthly and atheiſtical mind. But I fear that kingdom of CHRIST, and thoſe glorious manifeſtations and diſcoveries which are ſo much pretended to by many, if they ſhould be thoroughly examined, would be, at length, reſolved into nothing elſe but the advancement of ſome one party or intereſt above all the reſt, or the exchanging of an old form and dreſs of religion for a new one; and that this zeal would be found little better than the blazings of

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ſelf-love, a fire kindled not by a coal from the altar, but by a ſpark of their own. But, be it ſo, that this diſpoſition of theirs is ſincere and ſpiritual; ſhould not this charity begin at home? The moſt proper kingdom of CHRIST is that whereby he ruleth in the hearts of men; the moſt excellent worſhip is when the ſoul itſelf becomes a temple for the living GOD to dwell in, and to receive and reflect the manifeſtations of his glory, when a fire of divine love is kindled in it, and therein it doth offer up, not bulls and goats, no, nor ſo much prayers and meditations, as indeed itſelf unto GOD, which is a reaſonable ſervice, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, far more glorious than the Moſaical or Evangelical diſpenſation either, if you conſider it in the letter only. Whatever men may pretend, no man can be truly and rightly ſtudious of the advancement of the kingdom of GOD in the world, that hath not firſt felt the mighty power, and bleſſed effects of it in his own ſoul. Communion with the church is only ſo far to be valued, as it lies in order to a real and ſpiritual communion with GOD; which communion with GOD, if we do indeed ſincerely wiſh to others, we ſhall more abundantly labour to promote in ourſelves. I cannot believe that he doth heartily ſeek the happineſs of others, who himſelf ſits ſtill, and is content to be miſerable, eſpecially when their happineſs and his is one and the ſame.

3. IT condemns them for no Chriſtians, whoſe fellowſhip is only with their fellow creatures. We have

have seen that this is the character, the distinguishing character of a godly man, to have fellowship with GOD; it must needs follow then, that those degenerate souls that rise no higher than the world, that converse only with self or any other creature, are verily strangers to true Christianity, whatever their confidence or presumption may be. Christians, tell me not what you profess of CHRIST, what you believe of the gospel, what orthodox opinions you hold, what an honest party you side with, how many and specious duties you perform, no, nor what hopes or wishes you have of going to heaven; but tell me where is your principal communion; what do you mainly mind, follow, converse with; what pattern do you conform to; what rule do you live by; what object do you ultimately aim at? The whole world of worldly men doth hasten after another god, as the Psalmist's phrase is, though not all after the same GOD; they spend their souls indeed upon various objects, and use different methods to obtain rest, but yet all their happiness and contentment are ultimately resolved into creature-communion. That dreadful sentence, that the Apostle delivers universally concerning all men, is to be limited to all wicked men only, and of them it is undoubtedly true, *Phil.* ii. 21. *All seek their own, and none the things of Jesus Christ*: and of all these it is that of the Psalmist's *many* is to be understood, *Psal.* iv. 6. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?* i. e. any creature-good, as the words following do explain it. All unregenerate

souls

ſouls are bound up in the creature, ſome creature or other; and therefore the nobleſt of them, whatever brags they may make, is low and ignoble; their main converſe is but with their fellow-creatures, and indeed creatures much inferior to themſelves, *corn and wine*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *earthly things*, ſays the Apoſtle, *Phil.* iii. 19. *Who mind earthly things.* In a word, though it be true what the Apoſtle ſays in one place, that all men in the world do live in GOD, *Acts* xvii. 28. yet it is alſo true, that moſt men, as the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks elſewhere, do live *without God in the world*, have their hearts ſtaked down to one creature or other, and ſo fall ſhort of this honourable character which the Apoſtle here gives of godly men, *Our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.*

AND now I ſhall wrap up the remainder of this diſcourſe, in an humble requeſt and earneſt expoſtulation.

"RECKON not upon any happineſs below this "communion." There are many things which a Chriſtian may take to be comforts; but only one, this one, that he ought to take to be the happineſs of his life. I deſign not to ſpeak any thing to the prejudice of natural or civil ornaments or accompliſhments, much leſs to the diſparagement of any of thoſe endowments or employments which are, in a ſenſe, ſpiritual, commonly called gifts and duties; but, I confeſs, it is one of the great wonders of the world to me, to ſee ſuch a noble and intelligent being as the ſoul of man is, attending to, and

and purſuing after things either extrinſical or inferior to itſelf, in the mean time careleſsly forgetting, or wilfully rejecting its main happineſs, principal end, and proper perfection. As for thoſe ſenſual perſons, thoſe mere animals, whoſe ſouls are incarnate in their ſenſes, and ſeem to perform no higher office in the world than the ſouls of beaſts, that is, to carry about their bodies, who value themſelves by their bodies, or which is baſer, by the apparel that clothes them, or the eſtates that feed them, I ſhall not now trouble myſelf about them, but leave them to be chaſtiſed by *Seneca* or *Plutarch*, or indeed any ordinary Philoſopher. I ſhall rather apply myſelf a little to a ſort of higher-ſpirited people, whom by a condeſcenſion of charity we call Chriſtians, who, valuing themſelves by external profeſſions, privileges, performances, may indeed be ſaid to be ſomewhat more ſcrupulous and curious, but no leſs miſtaken than the former: for if the groſſer ſort of ſenſualiſts deny and profeſſedly abjure their own reaſons, and the finer ſort of hypocrites more cunningly bribe theirs, each method amounts to no more than a cheat, and both parties will be alike miſerable, ſave that the latter will be ſomewhat more tormented in miſſing of a happineſs which he looked and hoped for. It is not proper to my preſent diſcourſe, to ſpeak ſo highly and honourably of theſe externals of Chriſtianity, nor to preſs them ſo zealouſly, as I do at all times when I have occaſion; for I do verily value all ordinances of CHRIST, and duties

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of GOD's worſhip at a high rate; nay, I know not any ſerious and truly godly ſoul in the world, but it is of this ſame profeſſion with me: but, I muſt confeſs, I think it is one of the greateſt and moſt pernicious cheats in the world, for men to feed upon the diſh inſtead of the meat, to place their happineſs in thoſe things which GOD hath only appointed to be means to convey it. This was the great deſtruction of the Jewiſh church; by this they periſhed: thus they are every where deſcribed in ſcripture, as a people reſting in their privileges and performances, boaſting of their ſacrifices and temple-ſervice; they made account of a ſtrange kind of fleſh-pleaſing heaven, ſomething diſtinct from them, and reſerved for them, to be given them by way of reward for the righteouſneſs which themſelves had wrought by the power of their own free-will (which free-will, they ſay, is an effect of man's fall, but they make it a cauſe of man's riſe; for now he can purchaſe and merit a happineſs, which happineſs is alſo more illuſtrious than that given of mere grace;) which righteouſneſs, if we look either into their own writings, or GOD's writings concerning them, we ſhall find was nothing elſe but a ſtrict obſervance of the precepts of the Law, according to the letter and external diſpenſation of it. Such a low and legal ſpirit was generally found amongſt the *Jews*; I wiſh the greateſt part of us, who are in profeſſion and name evangelical, be not found as truly legal in ſpirit and temper as they were. If we cry, The goſpel of

CHRIST, the goſpel of CHRIST; with the ſame ſpirit as they cried, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*; our confidence will as ſurely betray us into a final miſery as theirs did. True, indeed, prayers, ſacraments, ſermons, are ſomewhat finer words than the old obſolete ones, the law, ſacrifices, ceremonies; but, alas! they are but words; at leaſt they are not gods, no more fit to terminate our devotions and affections than theſe. I beſeech you therefore, Chriſtians, be not miſtaken in this matter. True Chriſtianity is not a notion, but a nature; that is not religion which is lapped up in books, or laid up in mens brains, but it is laid in the very conſtitution of the ſoul, a new principle implanted by GOD in the higheſt powers of the ſoul, refining and ſpiritualizing all the faculties thereof, and rendering them as like to GOD himſelf, as ſuch a creature can reſemble its Creator. It is a truth as clear as the ſun is clear, that nothing can make a ſoul truly happy but what is wrought into the nature of it, and that muſt be ſomewhat more excellent than itſelf, and that can be nothing leſs than ſomething divine, even the image of the bleſſed GOD. If you be Chriſtians in deed and in truth, value all the ordinances of GOD, and the duties of the Chriſtian Religion, but value not yourſelves by theſe, your happineſs by theſe: attend upon them all for the maintaining and increaſing of real fellowſhip with GOD: for though theſe be not it, yet they are the way wherein it pleaſes GOD to give it: drink the ſincere

cere milk of the word, but let it be only with a holy deſign of growing thereby, of growing up into GOD, and a divine life. Away with thoſe low and baſe thoughts of happineſs; the happineſs of a ſoul is a high and excellent, indeed a divine thing; it is in ſome ſenſe common to GOD and the ſoul; GOD is happy in himſelf alone, and the ſoul can only be happy in him. What contentment, what real happineſs, Chriſtian, can the riſing of thy party in the world, or the riſing of thy name in the country bring thee, if, in the mean time, thou thyſelf harboureſt any carnal will or ſelf-intereſt that doth riſe up in oppoſition to the pure and perfect will and nature of GOD? how art thou happy in thy prayers, if thou caſt ſin out at thy mouth, and in the mean time a fountain of iniquity be ſpringing up in thy heart? What avails it towards a ſtate of perfection to be of the moſt orthodox opinions, the honeſteſt ſociety, the faireſt profeſſion, the moſt popular and ſanctimonious form, or the moſt plauſible performances either, the ſoul being in the mean time alienated from the life of GOD, and feeding upon ſome earthly traſh or other, which deſtroys the native powers and vigour of it, and keeps it under a perpetual languor? even juſt ſo much as a ſilken ſtocking upon a gouty leg, or a pincely diadem upon an aching head, avails towards a ſtate of eaſe, and ſoundneſs, and eucraſy of body. Let nothing limit your ambition but a ſtate of god-like perfection; let nothing ſet bounds to your loving and longing ſouls, but a real fruition

of

of GOD himself: nay, let not that bound them neither, but the more you enjoy, see, and taste, the more let your love be strengthened; after the manner of fire, which, the more it is fed, the more hungry and devouring it grows. In a word, let nothing satisfy you lower than the highest character that can be given of mortal men, to be men *after God's own heart*, to have GOD dwelling in you, to be filled with his fulness, to have this real and excellent *communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. To whom be all honour, praise, and glory, for ever and ever!

THE END.

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